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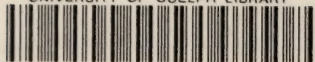
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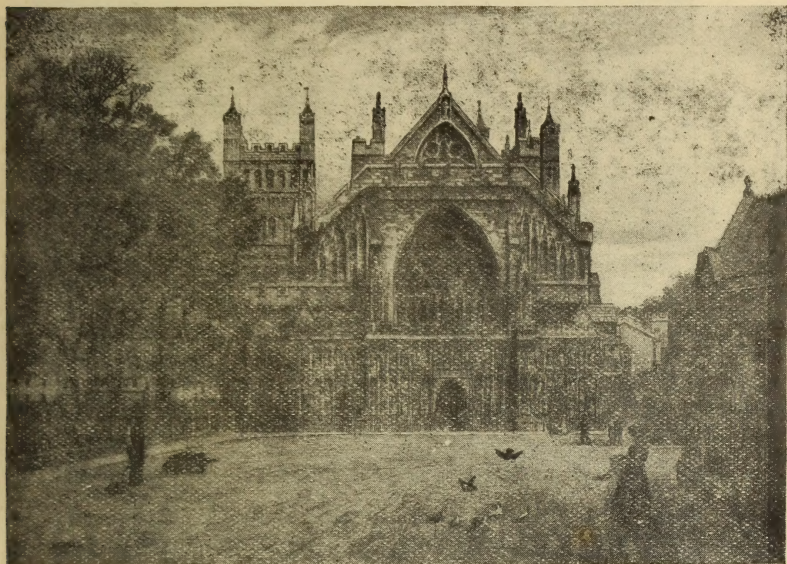
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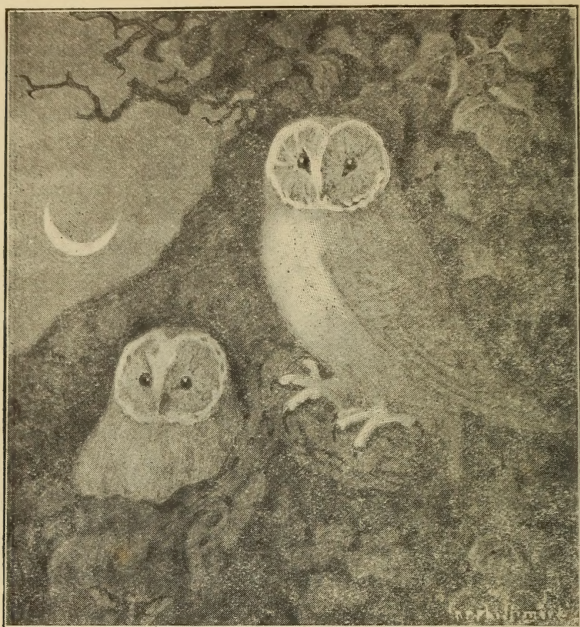
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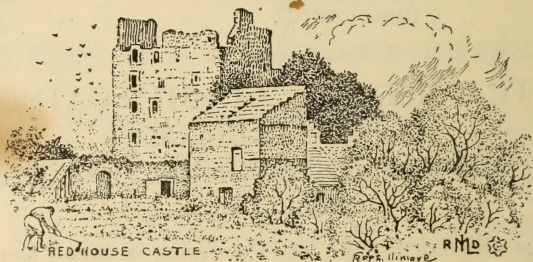
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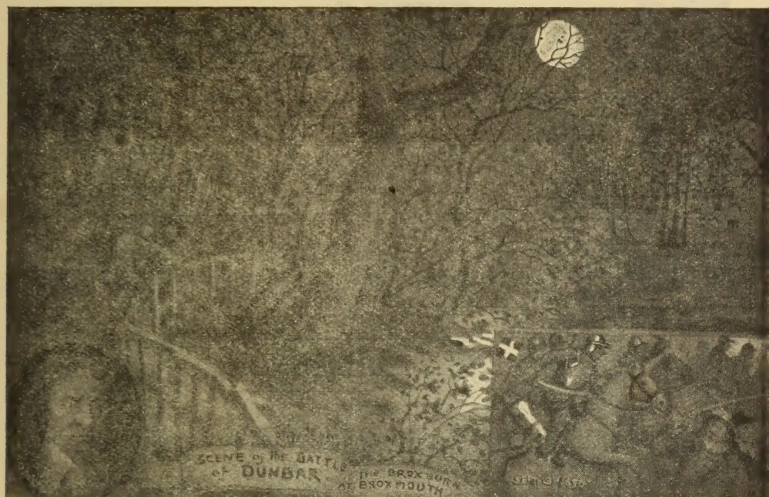
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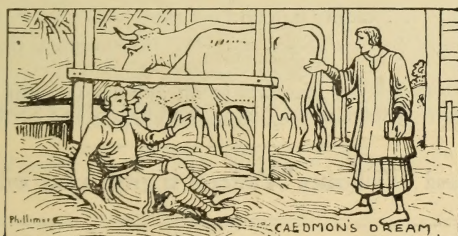
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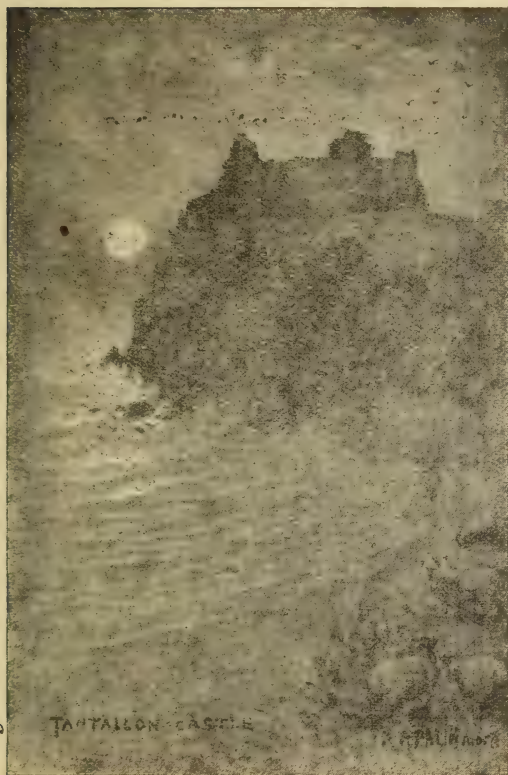
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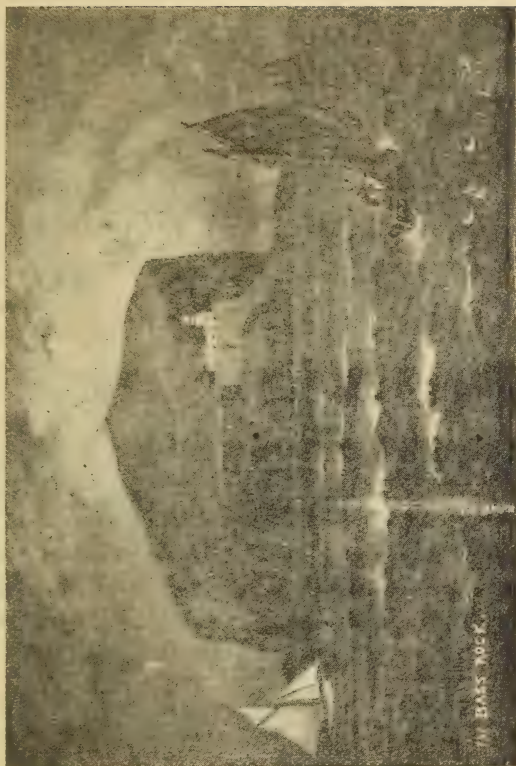
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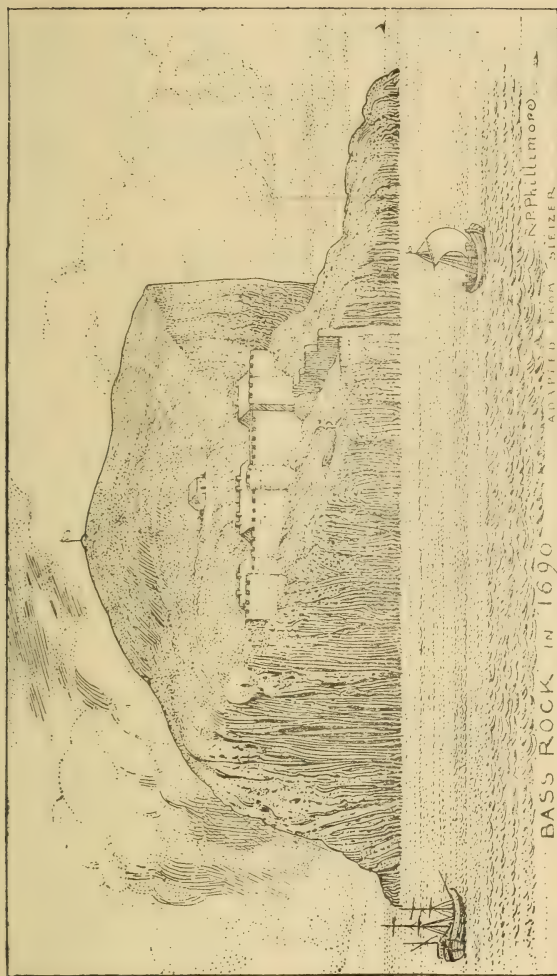
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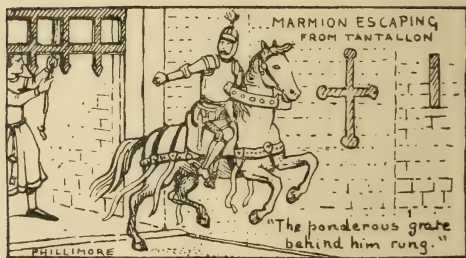






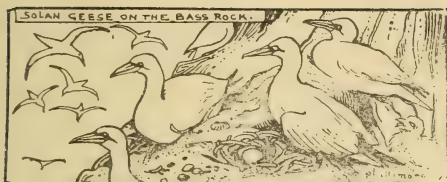
Sir Walter Scott's description of the Isles of the Forth in "Marmion."

"Far in the north, with downward blaze
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst :
Yonder the shores of Fife they saw,
Here Preston Bay, there Berwick Law,
And broad between them rolled
The gallant Forth, the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float
Like emeralds chas'd in gold."



THE BASS ROCK:

ITS HISTORY AND ROMANCE.



BY

R. P. PHILLIMORE, B.A.

With over 60 Pen Drawings by the Author.

NORTH BERWICK:
R. P. PHILLIMORE & CO.

1911.

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. . Preface. . .



AS previous handbooks of the Bass Rock are now out of print, it is hoped that this little volume, dealing as it does somewhat more fully with historical events than has been before attempted, will be appreciated by the many visitors to the sea-side resorts of Fife and Lothian, more especially by those who, attracted by the unrivalled beauties of links and shore, make their summer stay at North Berwick.

And here it is with regret I am constrained to repeat the emphatic protest I have already made, in the local press and in other ways, against the deplorable misuse and destruction of the sea-beach along Melbourne Road. At one time the sands of North Berwick were unrivalled for beauty and quality. But owing to the vast quantities of sand carted away in wholesale and reckless fashion, some of it even been exported out of the town by truck load, the appearance of the beach has very greatly deteriorated and the quantity of sand terribly diminished.

As little or no fresh sand is washed up by the sea, owing to the beach being closed in on the west by the wall of the Old Kirk green and seawards by the wide stretch of rocks, the damage to the Melbourne beach is of a serious and permanent character.

The picture sketched below shows the sort of thing that goes on at all hours of the day and frequently all day long from early morning till night.



In addition to these depredations, large quantities of refuse and stones are pitched down indiscriminately, so that an increasing amount of rubble and stones is being constantly spread over what little sand is left.

All appeals, made by owners of houses and persons who let apartments, who see their interests and prospects seriously imperilled, are ignored by the Town Council authorities.

Such acts of vandalism are unquestionably a disgrace to a town boasting itself "the Brighton of the North."

R. P. P.

NORTH BERWICK, *June, 1911.*

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THE BASS ROCK.



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THE rocky islands that dot the shores of the Forth have been picturesquely described by Sir Walter Scott in "Marmion" as "emeralds chased in gold." They have also been described as "bleak islets." Both these seemingly contradictory descriptions are true according as the sky is bright and sunny or, as so often happens in our northern climate, cloudy and overcast. Of these islands those known as the greater "emeralds" are Inchkeith, Inchcolm, May Island, and the Bass. The lesser "emeralds" being Cramond, Inchgarvie, Fidra, Eyebroughty, and Craig Leith. Over nearly all these islands there clings a halo of romance and legend. With Inchkeith we associate a gallant chieftain, of the name of Keith, who in one of the invasions of the Danes slew their leader, and received the island as a reward from a grateful King.

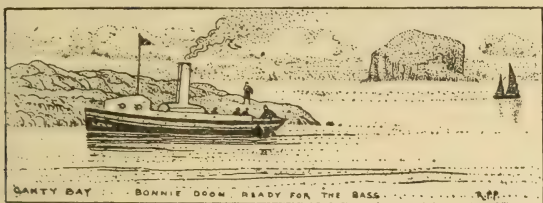
Inchcolm takes us back to the time of the Britons when the Druids are said to have here practised the mysteries of their religion. It was here, too, that David I., having sought refuge in a storm, was entertained by the hermit, and afterwards in gratitude founded a monastery, the ruins of which form at the present day a picturesque feature of the island.

The May Island in early Christian times was dedicated to religious uses, and here a colony of monks under the saintly Adrian were massacred by the Danes.

The beautifully shaped Fidra has also its historical associations, having had a monastic establishment in connection with the Abbey at North Berwick, and also a castle called Tarbert, which at one time belonged to the Lauders of the Bass. But none of these islands can in any way compare with the Bass Rock, either as to its historical associations or its natural beauty, standing lonely and isolated like a sentinel guarding the entrance to the Forth, girt around with the roaring breakers, its precipitous cliffs circled with screaming sea birds, and faced on the opposite heights by the hoary ruins of Tantallon towers. Since Archibald Dunbar, the poet friend of James IV., first immortalized it in his poems, it has been a source of inspiration to many literary persons, and artists and photographers have found it a subject worthy their best endeavours, whilst scientific men have been keenly interested in its geological formation and its natural history.

The Rock stands a little under two miles from Canty Bay, one of the most beautiful spots on the Hadding-

tonshire coast, and the usual port of embarkation for visitors, in the little steam launch the "Bonnie Doon."



From North Berwick, where also boats may be obtained for a delightful sail to the island, the distance is three miles. In circumference it is somewhat less than a mile, and its steep cliffs attain in their highest parts, about 320 feet above the sea. The surface, of about seven acres of grass, was in former times used by the farmer at Castleton as a grazing ground for sheep, Bass mutton being greatly esteemed in the Edinburgh market. In the present day rabbits are the only four-footed inhabitants.

Viewed from Canty Bay the Bass presents its most characteristic features. Conical in shape, the three terraces are plainly discernible; on the lowest the ruined walls and towers of the fortress and the modern lighthouse; on the second terrace the little ruined church, while on the summit may be seen the cairn on which in olden days the national emblem proudly floated in the breeze.



Access to the island has been rendered easy in modern times by two sets of concrete steps made at the time the lighthouse was built in 1902, and the climb to the summit has been facilitated by the concrete pathway leading to the fog horn, situated on the eastern cliffs. And not far from this point are the remains of the garden, once cultivated by the garrison, and close by is the old well.

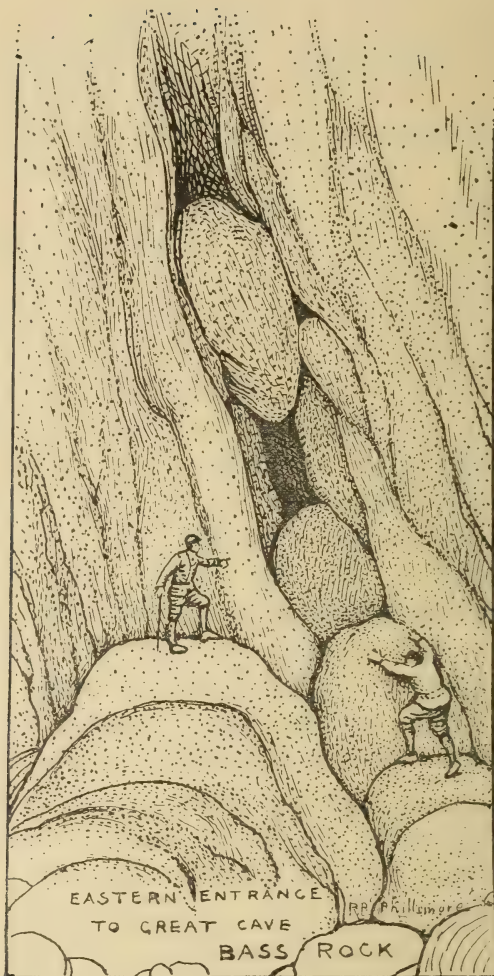
The importance of the island as a place of defence was early recognised by ancient writers, of whom the first was Hector Boece, a canon of Aberdeen. In his description, written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, he describes it as "ane wonderful crag with so narrow and strait hals (entrance) that na schip nor boit may arrive bot allanerlie at ane part of it." And he expresses the opinion—amply confirmed by its subsequent military history—that it is "unwinabill by ingine of man."

Our front page illustration will give a better general idea of the appearance of the Rock and the fortifications as they appeared in 1690 than any detailed description can do. The drawing is adapted from

Sleizer's which, like most drawings of the period, is very inaccurate as to the shape of the Rock itself, but most useful in giving us an idea of the fortifications as they used to be in the days of long ago.

It will be noticed that the embattlements extended right across the lowest terrace, having behind them the two buildings used as prisons and barracks. The house on the extreme east was the governor's abode, on the site of which now stands the modern lighthouse. These buildings roofed with red tile must have presented a very picturesque appearance. The bastion with embrasures for four cannon guarded the landing-place, and adjoining it was a wall used as a sentry-go, which ran perpendicular to the main wall of the fortress. Some writers have asserted that the bastion was used as a place of imprisonment, but there is no foundation for the statement or for the assertion that there were any dungeons adjoining or underneath it. The position, indeed, is too near the water's edge to be used as a prison or habitation, and being, moreover, at a considerable distance outside the walls of the fortifications would be quite unsuitable for such a purpose.

The most extraordinary natural feature of the rock is undoubtedly the remarkable cavernous tunnel that penetrates the island from east to west. It is about a hundred and seventy yards in length, being a natural fissure in the "trap" rock, and is certainly **not**, as some writers have asserted, a passage worn by the action of the sea. The length of the tunnel, its great height throughout, about 30 feet, and the fact that the floor



is covered by immense boulders renders this theory quite untenable. The floor, too, rises towards the centre of the cavern, and it is only at exceptionally high tides and storms that the sea is able to penetrate far within this gloomy recess. About the centre of the passage is a stagnant pool of water three or four feet in depth, and it requires care and some skill on the part of the explorer, who should be provided with a candle or, better still, a lantern, as there is generally a strong current of air blowing, to avoid an unpleasant accident. No signs of vegetable or animal life can be discovered in the dismal passage.

From the summit of the Rock a magnificent view of the surrounding scenery is presented, and its beauty, diversity, and magnificence have been well described in the following lines by "Delta"—

"Traced like a map the landscape lies
 In cultured beauty stretching wide :
 There Pentland's green acclivities—
 There ocean with its azure tide—
 There Arthur's seat, and gleaming through
 The southern wing Dun-Edin blue :
 While in the orient, Lammer's daughters,
 A distant giant range, are seen,
 North Berwick's Law, with cone of green,
 And Bass among the waters.
 Landward Tantallon lay with ruined walls
 Sepulchral—like a giant in old age,
 Smote by the blackening lightning flash, and left
 A prostrate corpse upon the sounding shore !
 Behind arose your congregated woods,
 Leuchie, Balgone, and Rockville—fairer none.

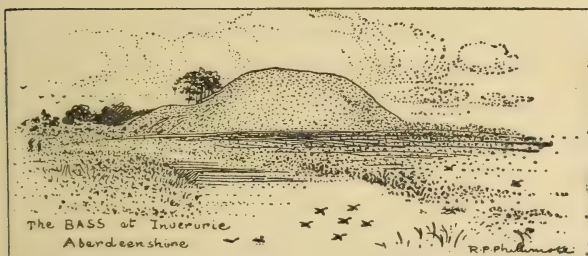
Remoter, mingling with the arch of heaven,
Blue Cheviot told where, stretching by his feet,
Bloomed the fair valleys of Northumberland.
Seaward, the Forth, a glowing green expanse,
Studded with many a white and gliding sail.
Winding its serpent form—the Ochils rich
Down gazing in its mirror ; while beyond,
The Grampians reared their bare untrodden scalps ;
Fife showed her range of scatterry coast-towns old.
From western Dysart, to the dwindling point
Of famed and far St. Andrews all beyond
Was ocean's billowy and unbounded waste,
Sole broken by the verdant islet May,
Whose fitful lights, amid surrounding gloom,
When midnight mantles earth, and sea, and sky
From danger warns the home-bound mariner ;
And one black speck—a distant sail—which told
Where mingled with its line the horizon blue."

Geologists tell us that the Bass Rock, like the other islands of the Forth, is of igneous quality, known as the "Trap," and that it is of a specially hard nature, forming the final link of a chain of volcanic masses stretching over the Lothians, and which in the glacial period had resisted the glacier action that had levelled or flattened the surrounding country.

Much ingenious speculation has been expended over the question as to the meaning of the word "Bass." The explanation is most probably simple. We know that most names of rocks, streams, and islands in Scotland are of Celtic origin, and almost universally descriptive. Besides the Bass Rock we find examples of the word in Aberdeenshire where two hillocks at Inver-

urie are called the "Bass" and the "Little Bass." The shapes are conical, and roughly similar to the shape of the Bass Rock. As there is a similar word in Celtic, Norse, and Icelandic signifying rocks or hillocks of conical shape, we may safely conclude that we have here the true explanation of the word.

Of prehistoric remains none have been discovered on the Bass, although on a rock, the Ghegan, on the shore opposite, a considerable "find" was discovered some years ago. The only remains of antiquity that have been brought to light are coins of the Carolean or Jacobean times, and at the foot of the castle walls a considerable deposit of broken tobacco pipes used by the garrison.





The long period of the peaceful rule of the Romans, and the disorders of the interregnum after their departure, had rendered the Picts, like the Britons of the South, an easy prey to their better organised enemies. Ida established his sway from the Forth to the Humber, and his kingdom became known as North-Humberland.

Fierce pagans as they were, the Saxons do not appear to have seriously interfered with or persecuted the conquered Picts whose religion was, at any rate nominally, the Christian faith planted amongst them during the Roman occupation, a period which it must be remembered had only terminated a little more than one hundred years previously. But with the influx and settlement of large bodies of Pagans of alien race and language the Christianity of the Picts must have been in great danger of being obliterated.

It was at this critical juncture that a remarkable Christian revival was being carried out in the West by St. Kentigern, or St. Mungo, the name by which he is better known, the patron saint of Glasgow. If we are to believe local tradition, St. Mungo was himself of East Lothian parentage, his mother being a Princess,



the daughter of King Loth, probably a Pictish chief who had submitted to the Saxon King Ida, and whose home was near Traprain Law. One can easily imagine that St. Mungo in his western home would be keenly anxious as to the state of his fellow-Christians and relatives dwelling amongst the Anglo-Saxons. We can also well understand how natural it would be for the few surviving priests in charge of the Christian churches in the Lothians to look to their fellow-countryman, who was becoming so famous in the West, for help and assistance in keeping alive the Christian faith and spreading it amongst both Saxons and Picts. The man who was chosen by St. Mungo as missionary for this purpose was named Baldred—one of his own disciples, and very possibly himself an Anglo-Saxon, as his name certainly seems to suggest.

It would have been essential that the missionary should speak English, as the Anglo-Saxons were very greatly in the majority. The names of the villages and towns in East Lothian amply prove this, being almost without ex-

ception of Saxon derivation, Pictish names only clinging to rivers, streams, rocks, and to a very few places that had been of importance in Pictish times, such as Dunbar and Tantallon. It is noteworthy that the villages with which St. Baldred's name is most associated—Tyninghame, Auldham, and Preston—were Anglo-Saxon settlements. The Pictish language must in such circumstances soon have become extinct. In a charter to the monks of St. Cuthbert of Tyninghame, dated 1097, it is significant that all the names of the witnesses are Saxon. According to the old chronicler, Simon of Durham, the bounds of Baldred's spiritual care extended from the Lammermoors to Inveresk. The success of his ministration and the extraordinary veneration in which he was held can only be compared with his great contemporaries—St. Columba and St. Mungo. But in one respect his success was not so complete as theirs. Baldred did not succeed in converting the successive Saxon Kings, Aethelric and Aethelfrith, to whom he owed allegiance. They remained unaffected by Christian teaching. King Aethelfrith, indeed, is credited with having ordered the slaughter of 2,000 monks, whom the Welsh in their great battle with the Saxons, near Chester, brought to the field to pray for victory whilst their soldiers were engaged in battle. "Whether they bear arms or no," said the Saxon King, "they fight against us when they cry against us to their God." The poor monks were nearly all slain. It was not till about twenty years after St. Baldred's death that Edwin, the great King of North-Humberland, the successor to the fierce Aethelfrith, embraced the Christian faith.



The veneration in which Baldred was held by the people of his generation is shown by the surviving legends as to the miracles he performed, and other manifestations associated with the district in which he exercised his ministry. St. Baldred's Well, St. Baldred's Whirl on the Tyne at East Linton, and St. Baldred's Cradle on the coast to the south of the Bass, are notable instances. One of the most marvellous events connected with his name is associated with the Bass Rock, on which he had established his cell, and from whence he issued forth on his ministerial duties. A great rock is said to have existed between the Bass and the shore, and to have been the cause of many shipwrecks. Baldred caused himself to be placed on this rock, and "at his nod" the rock arose, and, as if driven by the wind, proceeded to the nearest shore and remained as a standing memorial of the event. The rock is known to this day as "St. Baldred's coble or cock-boat." It stands close to the Carr Beacon.

Another miracle is related in connection with the three parishes, Preston, Auldham, and Tynninghame. On Baldred's death each of these claimed the right of sepulchre for his sacred body, and the dispute became keen. On the suggestion, however, of a certain old

man the disputants agreed to leave the body unburied for another night, and betake themselves to prayer so that the bishop might be strengthened and rendered more able to give a decision on the morrow.

“When day dawned,” says Holinshed, “there were found three biers with three bodies, decently covered with clothes, so like in all resemblance that no man might perceive the difference. Then by command of the bishop, and with great joy of all the people, the said several bodies were carried severally into the three several churches, and in the same buried, in most solemn wise, where they remain to this day in much honour with the common people of the countries near adjoining.” The following lines on this extraordinary event are by James Millar—

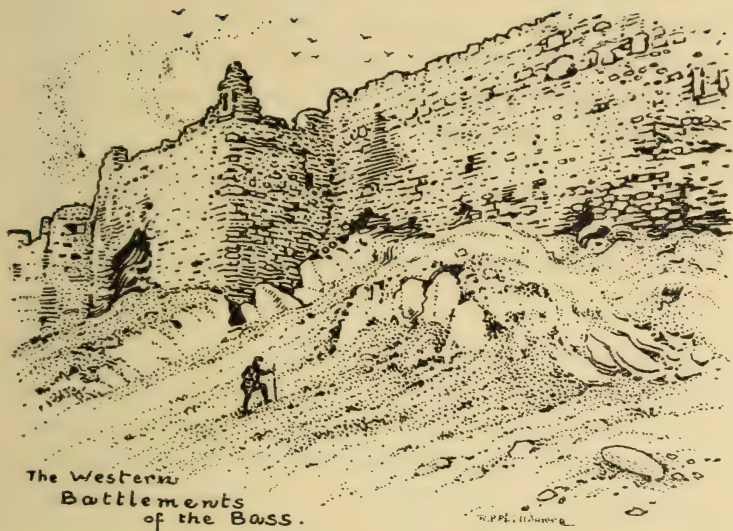
“Each load was borne most pompously,
Decked with its cross and rosary :
While, one by one, three corpses lay
Like twin-brothers, transformed to clay,
Moulded so nicely to each other,
The eye no difference might discover.
And as the tapers flickered dim,
The features looked uncouth—
They raised the sheet from Baldred’s face,
They turned the corpses where they lay :
In each his features clearly trace,
Crowned with a tuft of silvery grey.
They deemed his bright ethereal flame
Which mortal form could not control ;
From heaven had held a trio fame
To suit his zealous warmth of soul.”

Some quite modern writers have asserted without, however, giving any evidence, that Baldred was merely a

Culdee Presbyter. The fact, however, appears to be that there never were at any time any Culdees in the Lothians. The Culdees were Celtic hermits, and their existence in any part of Scotland cannot be traced till the middle of the ninth century—more than 200 years after Baldred's death. St. Baldred was no more a Culdee hermit than St. Columba or St. Mungo or St. Cuthbert. In Saxon chronicles and later documents he is always spoken of as a bishop and confessor, and as "the apostle of the Lothians." He is said to have died on the Bass Rock, 6th March, 606. At Tynninghame, in the grounds of the Earl of Haddington, where in olden times was the village, are still to be seen the ruins of a church, two of the arches of Norman design being in a good state of preservation. It is said that there used to be in days gone by a statue to St. Baldred in the churchyard of Preston-Kirk, of which he was patron saint, but that this was broken to pieces by a careless workman who had been instructed to build it into the church wall.



AP. PHILLIPS. RUINS OF TYNNINGHAME CHURCH BUILT BY THE NORMANS IN THE 12TH CENTURY



CHAPTER III.

HOW THE BASS BECAME SCOTTISH TERRITORY.

After the death of St. Baldred, the Christian faith continued to grow and flourish amongst the Saxons of the Lothians. His most noted successor was St. Cuthbert who, towards the end of his life, fixed his humble abode of rough stones and turf, with roof of wood and straw, on a little island of basaltic rock, not far from King Ida's great castle of Bamborough.

Like Baldred, St. Cuthbert was wont to leave his island hermitage from time to time and wander over the plains of Lothian preaching the Gospel with all the zeal and enthusiasm that so distinguished the apostle of the Bass.

Northumbria, at this period under the warlike Ecgfrith, was at the height of its power and influence, and seemed on the point of extending its sway beyond the Forth into the kingdom of Fife. But the career of the Saxon king was suddenly cut short.

At the battle of Nectan's Mere in Forfarshire, King Ecgfrith was defeated and slain by the Picts, and the flower of his nobility perished with him. This was in 685.

St. Cuthbert, to whom the tidings of disaster were the tidings of death, returned to his island hermitage only to die, murmuring with his last breath words of concord and peace. It had been agreed with the brethren of Holy Island, or Lindisfarne as it was then called, that a signal light should be the signal of his death.

When the monk watching from a tower saw the gleam from the candles which a monk on the lonely rock held in each hand, he hurried with the news into the church where the brethren were assembled.

As it happened they were chanting the words of the psalmist: "Thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad; Thou hast been displeased; Thou hast shewn Thy people heavy things; Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine."

This mournful dirge seemed indeed prophetic of coming doom to the Saxon church and people. And from this time the Northumbrian power and influence began to decline.

The Picts recovered their territory, and in alliance with the Scots became more and more persistent in their attacks on the Lothians. It was at this period of stress and danger that Northumbria had become noted as a centre of literary and religious life, when under the venerable Baeda the schools of Jarrow and York were famous over Western Europe.

After Baeda's death, lawlessness and confusion increased. King after king met a violent end, either on the battlefield or by the treachery of faithless subjects, whilst the Danes and Northmen harried the coasts and massacred the inhabitants with pagan ferocity.

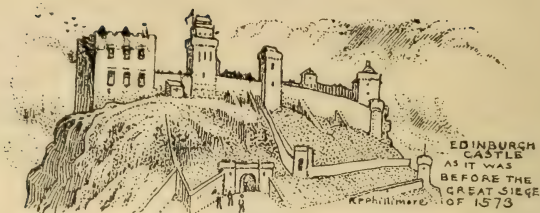
In addition to these calamities, famine and pestilence swept over the land.

In the confused records of these days of war and disaster there are, it is true, brief periods when the Northumbrians seemed about to recover their power and even to threaten that of the Scots.

In 934 we read of the mighty King Aethelstan, Aelfrid's golden-haired grandson, who as a child had been girdled with a sword set in a golden scabbard and a gem-studded belt, fighting the great battle of Brunanburgh, so celebrated in Saxon song, and defeating the great alliance against him of Scots, Danes, and Welsh.

A memento of his power in the Lothians still survives in the name of the pretty little village of Athelstaneford.

But not many years after this a Scots King, Indulph, of whom little is known, inflicted a fatal blow on the Saxon power by capturing Edinburgh Castle.



EDINBURGH
CASTLE
AS IT WAS
BEFORE THE
GREAT SIEGE
OF 1573

Before, however, Indulph could take advantage of this success he became involved in hostilities with the Northmen, and in a naval battle, said to have been fought off the Bass Rock, he fell in the hour of victory, in 962.

Ten years later we find a further sign of weakness in the Saxons, when King Edgar granted Lothian to the Scots King, Kenneth II., on condition of being recognised as his superior.

But the Scots during this period were at constant war with other enemies, the Danes and Britons, and were also afflicted with dynastic wars within their own borders, so that their hold on the Lothians seems to have been little more than nominal.

In 1005 Malcolm II., having conquered Kenneth III., became King of the Scots, and his reign, which marks a most important epoch in Scottish history, was inaugurated by the usual invasion of Lothian. The enterprise, however, ended in disaster, and for twelve years the Saxons appear to have been left in comparative peace. Then in the memorable year of 1018 Malcolm again invaded Lothian with a large army. For thirty nights before his coming the people of Lothian had been terrified by the appearance of a comet, in those days always a presage of disaster.

In a fierce battle fought at Carham on Tweed, the Scots King inflicted on the Northumbrians a defeat so crushing that their worst forebodings were realised. So decisive was the victory that nearly the whole male population between the Tweed and the Tees was said to have been cut off.

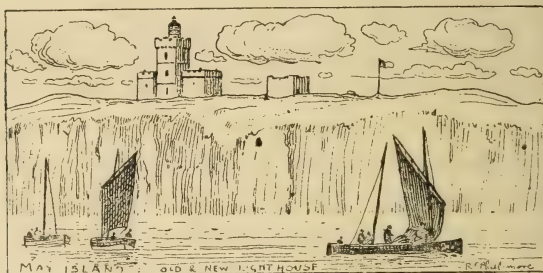


The Saxons were forced to make terms with their enemy. By a definite treaty the Lothians were ceded to the victors, and a Scottish King ruled over the English people of the Lowlands as well as over his own Scots of the Highlands.

This epoch-making battle, the most important in the history of Scotland, had far reaching results. The most significant being that though defeated and apparently absorbed the Saxon element became the dominant factor in the future development of the kingdom of Scotland.

By the battle of Carham, Malcolm raised himself to a position never before occupied by the kings of his race. He is the first to be described under the territorial title of "King of Scotia," and may, therefore, be fairly

considered as the founder of the kingdom of Scotland. A minor result of the battle was that the Saxon church of the Lothians, which up to this time had been under the jurisdiction of the church of Lindisfarne, came under that of St. Andrews, then the centre of the Celtic church. That the Bass Rock also at the same time came under the authority and ownership of St. Andrews, there can be little doubt. Although it may be noted that the May Island belonged to the monks of Reading in Yorkshire until about the end of the thirteenth century, when the Scots obtained it by purchase.

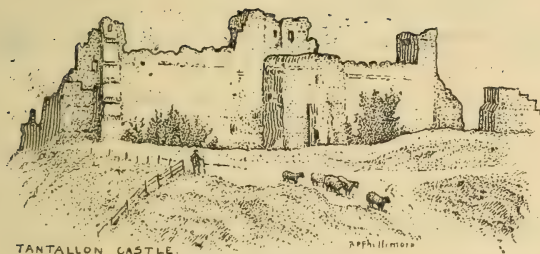


We may probably safely assume that up to this date the Bass, like the other islands of the Forth, was church property from the time when St. Baldred made it the place of his abode. This assumption is indeed strengthened by the fact that up to 1316 the island, with the exception of a small portion on which the castle was built, was owned by the bishops of St. Andrews.

When the castle was built is not known, but it seems very probable that Malcolm II., the conqueror of the Lothians, was the builder. At any rate, we know it must

have been built before the end of the eleventh century, as the portion of rock on which the castle stands was presented by Malcolm III. to a knight named Lauder, of Lauder tower in Berwickshire.

It was probably also during this period that Tantallon, the ancient fortification erected before the coming of the Romans by the Gadeni, was again fortified by the Scots King.



TANTALLON CASTLE.



CHAPTER IV.

THE LAUDERS AND THE WARS OF SCOTTISH
INDEPENDENCE.

Very soon after Lothian became Scottish ground in 1018 its influence was prominent in the affairs of the kingdom. Haddington was a place of Royal residence, and also the place where the commissioners from the four burghs of Berwick, Roxburgh, Edinburgh, and Stirling used to meet to arrange matters of common interest.

Among the names of families of East Lothian who became prominent are the Lauders who, as mentioned in the last chapter, had had the portion of the Bass on which was the Castle, presented to them by Malcolm Canmore.

It may be noted that the crest of the Lauders was a turret with a man looking out. This device may have been derived from their tower at Lauder, of which they were proprietors probably long before the castle of the Bass was built.

The loyalty of the family to Church and King became a distinguishing characteristic throughout their history.

In the reign of William the Lion we find a Robert Lauder embarking with David, Earl of Huntingdon, a brother of the King, on an expedition to the Holy Land.

But it is not till the heroic times of the wars of Scottish Independence that we get a more definite glimpse of the family.

In "Blind Harry's" account of these times, he tells us that a Sir Robert de Lavedre was Wallace's chosen follower, and accompanied him in many of his warlike exploits against the English. This is in all probability the "Good Sir Robert Lauder, the great Laird of Congleton and Bass," as he is said to have been described on his tomb in the old churchyard near the harbour at North Berwick, and who died in 1311.

Whether or not Lauder bent the knee to the great Edward is not known, but very many of the notables of East Lothian hastened to do so, amongst them the guardian and prioress of North Berwick Abbey.



Perhaps like his great leader Wallace, Lauder was enabled to bid defiance to the enemy behind the inaccessible walls of his island fortress. Although there is no evidence that Wallace ever made the Bass one of his places of retreat, yet it is eminently probable that he did so. We know that he was very closely associated with Lauder, and also that he was a visitor at Haddington only a few miles away. In October, 1297, the year before the disastrous defeat of the Scots at Falkirk, it is on record that Wallace was there and, in conjunction with the Regent Andrew de Moray, issued the celebrated letter to the mayors and commons of Lubeck, granting them freedom of trade with Scotland. The letter concluded with an expression of thankfulness to God that "Scotland is recovered by war from the English."

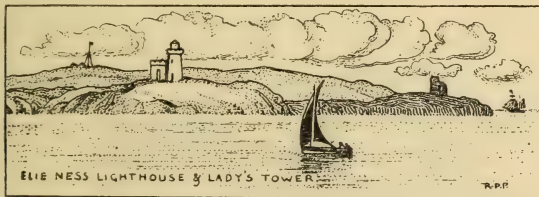
The son and successor of the "Good Sir Robert Lauder" was distinguished like his father for his bravery and loyalty to the Nationalist party, then under the leadership of Robert Bruce, with the able assistance of William de Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews. The Bishop had been one of Wallace's strongest supporters, and after that hero's death had jointly signed a bond with Bruce to support each other in every undertaking, no matter what, and not to act without the knowledge of

the other. Robert Lauder of the Bass, also gave valuable help and service to these patriots.

In 1316, two years after the victory of Bannockburn, we find a record that Bishop William de Lamberton granted to Robert Lauder that portion of the Bass Rock which belonged to the Church. This was, as previously mentioned, the larger part on the north of the terrace on which was the Lauder Castle. The deed gift states that the presentation was made in recognition of Lauder's "homage and service to the Church," it being only stipulated that he should pay yearly one pound of white wax at Tynninghame.

The charter describes the Bass as being near "Auldham in Lothian." Among the witnesses to this charter are Abbot Lord James Douglas, Henry Sinclair, and Robert Keith.

It may be mentioned that in olden times there were guest houses at North Berwick for travellers crossing to Elie in Fife, and that these are said to have been built by the Lauders.

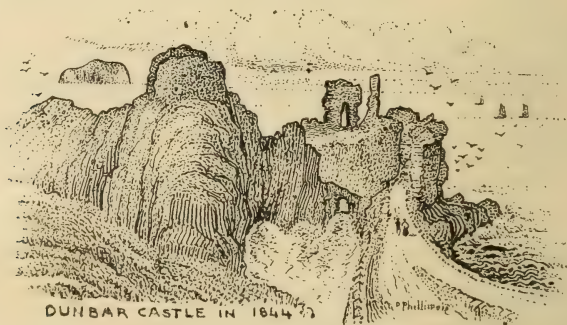


In this definite manner the Bass Rock was finally severed from the religious purposes to which it had been dedicated many centuries before in the time of the blessed Baldred. Henceforth the Lauders became verily

“Lauders of the Bass.” This signal mark of favour by the great Bishop was supplemented by King Robert Bruce who chose Lauder as his ambassador to the English Court when negotiations at last took place in favour of peace between the two nations. The final ratification was made in 1328, Lauder being one of the proxies. On the death of Bruce, Sir Robert Lauder was appointed to the important post of Lord Chamberlain of Scotland, and in addition to this he acted as Justiciary of the Lothians.

On the outbreak of Civil War, when Edward Balliol laid claim to the crown, Lauder remained faithful to the young King David. The English invaded the country in support of the “Straw King” as Balliol was called. Lauder accompanied the army for the relief of Berwick, then held by the English. The expedition ended most disastrously for the Scots in the fatal battle of Halidon Hill in 1333. Sir Robert Lauder was present at the battle, but took no part in it on account of his age and infirmity.

Some years afterwards, in 1338, a victorious English army marched to the shores of the Forth and laid siege to the castle of Dunbar.



DUNBAR CASTLE IN 1844

The castle was held by the famous "Black Agnes," wife of Earl Patrick, and daughter of the noted Randolph, Earl of Murray, the great friend and companion in arms of Robert Bruce. The Countess displayed the greatest bravery, and many tales are told of her exploits.

But the English, under the Earl of Salisbury, succeeded in surrounding the castle, both by sea and land, so that the garrison were reduced to severe straits for want of food and men. The surrender of the castle, the "Key of Scotland," as it was considered in those days, seemed inevitable.

At this critical juncture a Scottish knight, who had already distinguished himself by his feats of arms against the English under Wallace, came to the rescue. This was Sir Alexander Ramsay, of Dalhousie, who, finding there was no hope of breaking the lines of the besiegers on the landward side, betook himself to the Bass Rock and embarking under cover of a dark night, with forty determined companions, sailed for the castle of Dunbar, which is about ten miles distant.

Having successfully eluded the English vessels, he entered the "strong house" by a postern on the sea side. He brought with him much needed provisions, and, with the addition of his men, was enabled to make a successful sortie, and, taking the enemy by surprise, he inflicted such losses that the Earl of Salisbury, despairing of success, raised the siege, which had stretched out to nineteen weeks, and led away his forces south over the border.

This remarkable exploit of Sir Alexander's was shortly afterwards followed by another, in which the valiant knight succeeded in capturing the castle of Roxburgh, one of the most important strongholds then held by the English. These remarkable achievements so pleased King David that he conferred the high office of Sheriff of Roxburgh on Sir Alexander.

But unfortunately this proved the ruin of the brave knight. It appears that Lord William Douglas, the "Knight of Liddesdale" as he was called, considered that he was entitled to this office, and although he was his friend and companion in arms, yet so incensed was he by jealousy that he collected his retainers and treacherously attacked Sir Alexander when in the act of administering justice at Hawick. Sir Alexander thus basely attacked was wounded and taken prisoner, and carried away to the Douglas Castle of Hermitage in Liddesdale.

Here he was cast into a gloomy dungeon without attendance, and with no food except some grain that fell from a loft above the dungeon. After lingering for seventeen days, he died miserably.

This happened only about four years after the exploit from the Bass Rock. It is said that in recent times the bones of Sir Alexander Ramsay, with a bit and saddle, were discovered in the dungeon of Hermitage Castle, and that these relics came into the possession of Sir Walter Scott.

King David, although greatly angered at this treacherous and cruel murder, was unable to inflict any punishment. The "Black Knight of Liddesdale" was

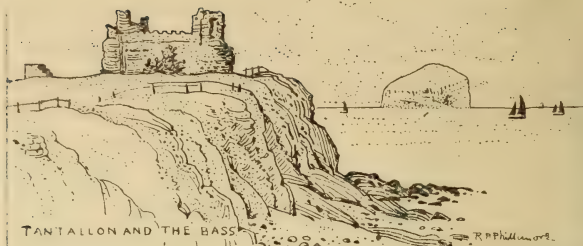
far too powerful a subject to fear the Royal anger. To the people of those days he was known as the "very flower of chivalry," the "scourge of England, and the buckler of Scotland."

But in 1353, in Ettrick forest, the "Black Knight" met his death at the hands of his kinsman, Lord William Douglas, of Tantallon, the same knight apparently who is said to have treacherously betrayed Wallace at the battle of Falkirk.

It may be mentioned that Sir Robert Lauder, whom we might describe as "the patriot," died in 1339, the year after Sir Alexander's notable exploit from the Bass Rock. He left his title and estates to his son, Sir Robert Lauder, of Quarrelwood, in the county of Nairn.



TANTALLON CASTLE From the East



CHAPTER V.

PRINCE JAMES' SOJOURN ON THE BASS.

From time immemorial the Bass Rock and Tantallon have been associated together in the Scottish mind.

"Ding doun Tantallon, mak' a brig to the Bass," was a popular adage signifying two feats that were practically impossible.

But although so associated in popular phrase, and separated from each other only by a narrow strait of water, there is little in the history of the two places connecting them together.

The name of Lauder of Bass is not often found in conjunction with that of the chieftains of Tantallon. The families of the two castles seem to have maintained a separate orbit, and the characteristics of each seem to have been preserved throughout their history.

In this chapter, however, the reader will have unfolded before him a tragic and somewhat tangled story in which the Bass and Tantallon are linked together.

Robert III., with his kind and indolent disposition, was little fitted to play the part of a feudal king, and he was still further incapacitated owing to a kick from a

horse, which from youth had rendered him incapable of taking part in the knightly exercises common to the nobility of that age.

He had assumed the name of Robert, by way of happy omen, at his coronation, in lieu of his own name of John, which was considered unlucky in view of the unfortunate careers of the kings of that name in England, Scotland, and France.

The real ruler of Scotland at this time was Robert, Earl of Fife, the King's brother, a capable and ambitious man who easily maintained his ascendancy, and who, as Duke of Albany, and Guardian of the realm, succeeded in holding the reins of government for over fifty years.

There was indeed a brief period in which Albany lost the position of Guardian, when his place was taken by the King's eldest son, the Duke of Rothesay. But Rothesay was hopelessly dissolute, and Albany's triumph was assured when he received the King's consent for the young man's arrest. Suddenly seized, when himself on an expedition of violence, the Prince was cast into a dungeon of Falkland Castle.

The announcement of his death very soon after inevitably gave rise to all sorts of sinister rumours. Poor old King Robert was overwhelmed with grief at the tragic death of his son, and naturally fearful and suspicious of his brother the Regent. And not less so of another brother, Alexander, who had displayed such ferocity and lawlessness that he had earned the surname of "The wolf of Badenoch." The Earl of Douglas, also, whose daughter had married the late Prince, was now in alliance with the Albany faction.

There appeared to be no one of sufficient power in Scotland able to cope with these powerful and unscrupulous barons, to whom the King might entrust the person of his remaining son, James, a boy about twelve years of age. In consultation, therefore, with the Bishop of St. Andrews, the Earl of Orkney, Sir David Fleming, and other advisers, the King decided to send Prince James to France where he might be educated in safety, under the guardianship of the King.

That great caution and secrecy were necessary to avoid any action that the all-powerful Albany and Douglas might take, is shewn by the methods adopted and by subsequent events.

Instead of sailing direct from St. Andrews, where the young Prince was being educated, he was taken in the first instance across the Forth to North Berwick, which only a few years before had been visited by King Robert, who had granted it a charter. It is indeed said that the figure of this King is depicted on the Seal of the Burgh sitting in the stern of the vessel on the shield. The loyalty of North Berwick was undoubted, but the castle of Tantallon, then under the control of Albany and the Douglasses, was too near to be considered a safe place of sojourn for the Prince until a ship arrived from Leith to take him to France. He was, therefore, hurried on board a boat and taken to the fortalice of the Bass, where the loyalty of the Laird, Sir Robert Lauder, was unquestioned, and where he could remain in safety till the arrival of an outward-bound vessel.

It was early in the year of 1405 when Prince James and his retinue, consisting of the Earl of Orkney, Sir

David Fleming of Cumbernauld, the Lords of Dirleton and Herdmanston, and other Lothian notables, arrived at the castle of the Bass.



It was an inclement season of the year, when access or departure from the Rock is often difficult and dangerous. Probably to this is due the fact that the Prince and his companions remained on the island over a month, and also it may be to the winds being unfavourable for vessels sailing from Leith down the Forth. The accommodation on the Bass must have been in those days of a very primitive character, and the Royal party must have spent anything but an agreeable time of waiting.

From subsequent events there can be no doubt that the Duke of Albany and the Douglasses knew of what was going on, and very probably a keen watch was kept from the towers of Tantallon on the proceedings at the Bass Rock.

Eventually the Prince was enabled to embark for France on a merchant vessel, accompanied only by the Earl of Orkney and a small personal suite. Doubtless there must have been many anxious adieus and good wishes for "bon voyage" from the rest of the party who remained on the Rock.

As a truce was existing between the two countries there appears to have been no apprehensions of danger from the English. Yet the little vessel had scarcely reached Flamborough Head when an armed merchantman of Wye hove in sight, and the Prince and his companions found themselves prisoners of the King of England.

Carried to London, they were brought into the presence of King Henry IV. The Earl of Orkney bore a letter from King Robert to Henry entreating him if his son should, owing to stress of weather, put into an English port, to show him kindness and hospitality. The Earl himself pointed out that the young Prince was on his way to France for the purpose of his education, and prayed that they might be permitted to pursue their way in peace and security.

But as the capture had been deliberately planned, and Henry knew only too well how insecure his hold on the throne really was, no feelings of justice or honour had any weight in comparison with the advantage he had secured.

The seizure was a gross breach of faith and of the law of nations, but then the English King had obtained a valuable pledge for the good behaviour of the northern kingdom. The Scots heir-apparent being in his hands, he could employ this advantage as a counter move to the use that was being made by the Scots of the rumour that poor King Richard, who had undoubtedly been murdered by King Henry's orders, was still alive in Scotland. This had been a source of very great annoyance and anxiety to King Henry, and he no doubt felt relieved and elated at what he considered a stroke of luck.

He therefore replied to the request of the Earl of Orkney that the Prince would be perfectly safe with him, and that, as he spoke French as well as the French King, his father could not have sent his son to a better master than himself.

So Prince James and his friends were sent to that gloomy prison, the Tower of London. But later on, the Prince was allowed to reside at Windsor amid surroundings much more congenial, and where he could indulge his taste for poetry and fall in love—and also meditate on plans of revenge.

To the ambitious Regent Albany, who is said to have given the English King warning of the intended voyage to France, the news of the capture was a source of satisfaction, as it was more to his interests that his nephew should be a prisoner in the safe keeping of the King of England, rather than an honoured guest at the Court of France. The feeble remonstrances of the Regent deceived no one.

No sooner had the vessel carrying the Prince and his party sailed away from the Bass, than those on the Rock, who had there formed his little court, returned to North Berwick, no doubt congratulating themselves on the success of the Prince's departure. But the Douglas gang, infuriated at the escape of the Prince, formed a plot to revenge themselves. Sir James Douglas, of Abercorn, appears to have been the leader in the scheme.

Collecting some of his retainers, he lay in wait near Herdmanston Castle, the seat of the St. Clairs', whither the party from the Bass were making their way, unsus-



DOORWAY
OLD CASTLE
HERDMANSTON

picious of danger. It was on a lonely moor, called Long Herdmanston, that the attack was made. Sir David Fleming was killed on the spot, and the Lord of Dirleton and the other barons were made prisoners. It appears that Sir David Fleming was specially obnoxious to the Douglas and Albany faction, not only on account of the active part he had taken in getting Prince James out of Scotland, but also for having exposed and refused to take part in a treacherous conspiracy between the Douglasses and Henry, King of England.

At this time, Archibald Earl of Douglas, Murdock the son of the Regent Albany, and some others were

prisoners of war at the English Court, having been captured at the battle of Shrewsbury, while two English nobles, Lord Bardolf and the Duke of Northumberland, who were hostile to King Henry, were refugees in Scotland.

To get these noblemen into his clutches, Henry offered to surrender Archibald Earl of Douglas, and Murdock, if they would induce their friends in Scotland to seize Bardolf and Northumberland and deliver them up to his vengeance. The proposal had been laid before Sir David Fleming, but he not only refused to join such a base and dishonourable plot, but gave Bardolf and Northumberland warning of the scheme against them.

They succeeded in escaping to Wales, but Sir David Fleming paid the penalty for his honourable dealing on the moor at Long Herdmanston.

When the news of these events, and the capture of the young Prince reached Scotland, poor old King Robert was overwhelmed with grief at this last of a series of calamities. For it was about this time that the death of his Queen and also of his faithful adviser, the Bishop of St. Andrews, took place.

Thus left solitary and desolate, the poor old man died a few months after at his castle of Rothesay, in Bute.



DIRLETON CASTLE



CHAPTER VI.

THE POET KING'S REVENGE.

Whilst Prince James was dragging out nineteen years of weary captivity in England, the Duke of Albany, as Regent, ruled Scotland without a rival, and when he died in 1420, after an administration, which is generally admitted to have been one of the most successful in Scottish history, of over fifty years, his son, Duke Murdock, became Regent in his stead.

Murdock, like his father, appears to have shown at first little or no disposition to bring about the return of the Scots King from captivity. But the Duke had not his father's capacity for managing and curbing the lawless and turbulent Scottish baronage. Indeed, it is said he was unable to control the violence of his own sons.

One story, told by Buchanan, relates how the old man had a bird which he prized highly, of the falcon species, which his son Walter having often asked for, and always been refused, at last, in anger, snatched it from his father's hand and wrung its neck. Exasperated at this outrage, the Duke exclaimed, "Since you cannot submit to obey me, I shall bring another, whom both you and I

will be forced to obey." From this moment he bent his whole mind to release his cousin, King James, from captivity.

And it was certainly appropriate that the Lauders, who had been so conspicuous nineteen years before in opposition to the designs of Duke Robert the Regent, and had taken such a prominent part in getting Prince James out of Scotland, should now be chosen by Duke Murdock as the instruments for arranging the return of the King.

It was a Sir Robert Lauder of the Bass, and his brother William, Bishop of Glasgow, and Chancellor of Scotland, with some other noblemen, who formed the commission that proceeded in 1423 to London to arrange terms with the Government of the boy King, Henry VI. In his commission Sir Robert Lauder is designated as "our loveit of the Bass." The English Regent, John, Duke of Bedford, son of Henry IV., the captor of the Scottish Prince, was apparently glad to release his prisoner. The increasing difficulties of the war with France, and the want of money and other troubles, had convinced the Duke of the wisdom of coming to terms. But this was not arranged until the Scots had agreed to pay a heavy ransom, or, as the English expressed it, a bill for the expenses of his education and upbringing, of about forty thousand pounds.

James had made friends in England, and had fallen in love with the beautiful Joan Beaufort, the "milk white dove," in whose praise he is said to have composed the celebrated poem, "The King's Quhair."

It has to be admitted that James had received an excellent education at the English Court, and had more

accomplishments than were usual amongst the nobility of Scotland. He understood the advantages of law and order, and was keenly desirous of keeping in check the lawless elements in his kingdom.

The saying is attributed to him: "If I am spared, I shall bring in a change such as men little dream of. There is not the wildest spot where the key shall not keep the castle and the bracken bush the cow."

But these excellent sentiments were mingled with a relentless disposition and the baser feelings of malice and revenge. That he had cherished for years an implacable hatred against the family of Duke Robert of Albany, his uncle, soon became evident.

He had only been in Scotland a few months when he suddenly ordered the arrest of Sir Walter Stewart, and his imprisonment in Lauder's castle of the Bass, under the custody of the governor, John Herring.



Here, indeed, the poor prisoner had ample opportunity of meditating on his past conduct and judging of the truth of his father's words when he said he would bring home one who would rule them all.

This is the first occasion recorded in history of the Bass being used as a State prison.

Strangely enough, at the Coronation the King had allowed Duke Murdock, who as a descendant of the Earls of Fife seems to have possessed this right, to place the crown on the Royal head. But very shortly afterwards the Duke was suddenly arrested and sent a prisoner to Caerlaverock Castle.

Even the Duchess herself did not escape the Royal vengeance. Dragged from the banquetting hall at her husband's castle of Tantallon, she was shut up in the dark and gloomy dungeon of that stronghold under the western tower, where only a small narrow window lets in a feeble ray of light, and which in the present day the curious visitor investigates by the aid of candle-light.

There is undoubtedly an element of mystery in these events not a little suggestive of the treachery and murderous intrigue that was so rife amongst the feudal baronage of that age.

It seems strange that Sir Robert Lauder, who had been selected by the Regent Murdock as the delegate in the negotiations for the return of the King from England, should have been chosen as the jailer of the Regent's son, Walter.

The Regent Murdock, his two sons, Walter and Alexander, the aged Earl of Lennox, father-in-law of Murdock, and Sir Robert Graham, the younger son of Sir Patrick Graham, of Kincardine, who one day was to revenge his wrongs so terribly and fatally on the head of the King, were brought to trial at Stirling before an assize of twenty-one barons, over whom the King himself did not scruple to preside.

The precise terms of the charges are not recorded, but the wishes of the royal president were obvious, and, as usual in State trials of that period, were amply sufficient to ensure the death sentence.

The Albany family had been popular with the commons, and when the victims, all men of fine stature and appearance, suffered an unjust and ignominious death on the heading hill at Stirling the feelings of the people found vent in loud expressions of horror and indignation.

The beautiful ballad, "Young Waters," is supposed to refer to Walter Stewart who was a great favourite of the nation :

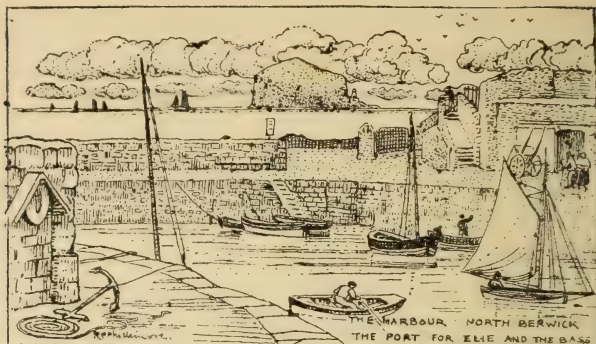
" They hae ta'en him tae the Headin' Hill,
That knight sae fair to see :
And for the words the Queen had spake,
Young Waters he did dee."

Buchanan mentions a report of the time that King James carried his implacable hatred against the Albany family so far as to send the gory heads of her father, husband, and sons to the widowed Duchess of Albany in her gloomy dungeon at Tantallon, "on purpose to try whether so violent a woman in a paroxysm of grief might

not betray the secrets of her soul, but she, although affected by the unexpected sight, used no intemperate expression, but only said if the crimes charged were fairly proven, the King acted justly and rightly."

When in 1437 the poet King fell a victim to the vengeance provoked by his ruthless measures, Sir Robert Graham, the chief of the assassins, when undergoing the terrible tortures inflicted before his execution, exclaimed that posterity would justify his act as the destruction of a cruel tyrant. And that James I. displayed a ruthlessness and a remarkably tyrannical spirit in dealing with the lives and property of those who offended against his notions of order and good government cannot be denied.





CHAPTER VII.

ROYAL FAVOURS, AND A VISIT FROM KING JAMES IV.

Although King James II., of the fiery face, had more tact and genius for government than his murdered father, James I., yet the baronage of Scotland had so aggrandised themselves during his long minority that he found himself forced into a long and bitter contest to maintain his supremacy, and it required all the military skill of which he had a considerable share to overthrow the formidable league which the Douglasses had formed against him, and which at one time seemed not unlikely to substitute a Douglas for a Stewart king.

Of course it goes without saying the Lauders of the Bass were, as ever, faithful to their sovereign, and their loyalty met with its reward. In one document, of the year 1450, we find Sir Robert Lauder, the son of the laird known as Robert with the "Boreit Whynger," presented with the manor of Edrington. He was also made Warden of the Marches and Captain of the Castle of

Berwick, for which he received a substantial salary, as proved by the following extract from the Exchequer rolls :
“ Per solutionem factam Roberto Lawder de Bass in plenam solutionem pensionis sui ducentarum mercarum pro custodia castri de Berwic.”

When James was killed by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Roxburgh it is very probable Lauder as Warden of the Marshes was there.

During the minority of the young King, James III., with all the troubles and intrigues that ensued, we do not find any mention of the Laird of the Bass. After the young King had assumed the government of Scottish affairs, we find Lauder, acting in his capacity of Warden of the Marches, conducting the ambassadors of the King of England to Edinburgh. They were entrusted with the custody of two thousand marks as a first instalment of a dowry of the Princess Cecilia whose betrothal to Prince James, afterwards James IV., was then a subject of negotiation between the two countries. The arrangement, however, fell through, owing to the outbreak of the old quarrels. This member of the Lauder family seems to have been somewhat litigious and quarrelsome, and prone to dispute over trifling matters with his neighbours.

In one case he was in conflict with the Prioress of North Berwick Abbey over some barrels of grease of the solan geese of the Bass Rock. The Prioress made her claim against Lauder as lay rector of the Bass. This somewhat trumpery dispute was referred to Rome. The Pope referred the case back to Scotland to the Prior and

Archdeacon of St. Andrews to make enquiry. How the matter ended is unknown. But the Papal Bull, which is in existence, giving the instructions as to the barrels of grease, is important in another respect.

By a sentence referring to the church on the Bass we are enabled to fix the date at which it was built.



The Bull describes the church as “noviter erecta,” and is dated, 6th May, 1493. We may therefore conclude that it was built some time prior to that year, and very probably replaced an older building, perhaps on the site of St. Baldred’s cell. In the ruins of the building there appear indications of an earlier structure of claystone porphyry, probably quarried from Dirleton where similar stone is still obtained for local purposes.

It is a curious fact that the church was not consecrated till about fifty years afterwards, when, in 1542, the ceremony was performed by Bishop William Gibson, suffragan to David Beaton, the famous Cardinal and Archbishop of St. Andrews.

According to the record found in the *Extracta ex Chronicis Scocie* it was the Parish Church, and was dedicated to St. Baldred, who is described as “bysschop and confessor.”

The vicar of this small parish seems to have been the priest of the Parish Church of North Berwick, since we find in later times that the minister of North Berwick, in virtue of his office, was entitled to receive twelve solan geese yearly.

To return now to Sir Robert Lauder. Besides this action against him in the papal court with reference to the barrels of grease, there are records of other actions in the Scottish courts.

Against his neighbour, David Hepburn, of Waughton, he had more than one action with reference to the recovery of certain lands, and also as to the "cting and destroying of a meadow and gerss thereof."

Then he had a dispute with Robert Lawdare, of Bele, and with John Fenton of that ilk, for recovery of two oxen taken surreptitiously from his herd. He was also joint-pursuer with the proprietor of Mencleuch in a law plea against one James Pringle, regarding the possession of certain lands of "umquhile Oliver Lauder, of that ilk."

On another occasion it is recorded that Sir Robert was condemned for illegally impounding two horses belonging to Thomas Craig, of "ye Est Crag."

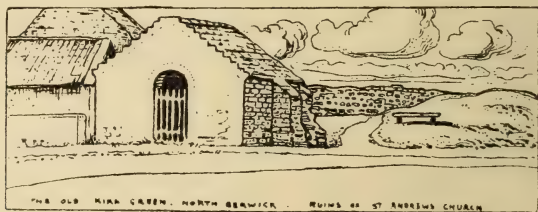
At the time of the terrible episode at Lauder, where the King's friends were so treacherously and cruelly slaughtered by Archibald, Earl of Angus—"Bell the Cat"—and his associates, Sir Robert Lauder, as Warden of the Marches, must, one would think, have been present with the army. But amongst the actors in these tragic events his name does not appear.

One account, however, states that the rope used for hanging the prisoners was obtained from the Lauder Tower, which was close by the scene of the arrest.

In the succeeding reign of James IV., Lauder was undoubtedly a "persona grata" with that chivalrous and romantic monarch.

In the year 1491, James IV. confirmed a gift by Agnes Fawland, wife of Robert Lauder of the Bass, to the church of St. Andrew at North Berwick. This was in the shape of annuities amounting to 15 merks per annum, for the purpose of providing a chaplain to officiate at St. Mary's altar in that church.

There can be little doubt from this and other evidences we have that the old church on the Kirk green, by the harbour at North Berwick, was in a special degree held in sacred veneration by the Lauder family for many generations, and the North Berwick boats must often have been in requisition to bring them to hear mass, and offer up their devotions at St. Mary's altar.



And, as before mentioned, the churchyard was their place of sepulchre.

On 23rd May, 1497, King James IV., when on a tour of inspection at Dunbar, paid a visit to the Bass Rock for

the purpose of sport. In the Exchequer Rolls the expense of the visit is put down at 14 shillings paid to the "bote-men that brought the King furth of the Bass."

James was often in the Forth, and frequently visited the May Island, either on pilgrimage, or for the purpose of shooting the sea birds with the culverin.

James was certainly Scotland's sailor King, proud of his ships and his men, and often going on board his war vessel, the "Great Michael."

There were several sea fights, during his reign, with the English. In one of these, in 1490, Sir Andrew Wood, the greatest Scottish admiral of those days, fought a great battle off the Bass Rock. The English were under a captain named Stephen Bull. It was a most heroic contest, fought with great determination on both sides. At sunset of the second day, the flag of St. Andrew floated victoriously on the English vessels in place of the flag of St. George.

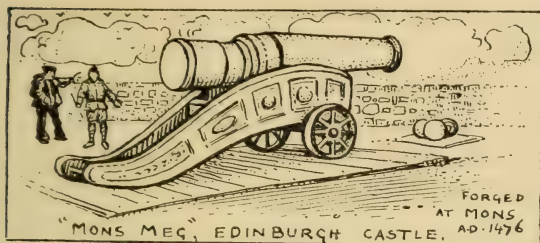
"It is schippe to schippe and manne to manne,
 And hande to hande they be;
 There's clashinge o' swordes an' whizzing o' dertes,
 And the roar o' gunnerie.
 And they ficht and ficht, baith Southron and Scot,
 Full stoure and stalwarthlie.
 There's nane to spare, there's nane to yielde,
 And nane to cry mercie,
 Thoch red rows the tide wi' het hertes blude—
 Richt awesome for till see!"

"The battle it was fiercely fought,
 Near to the craig of Bass;
 When we next fight the English loons
 May nae waur come to pass."

In this instance, as on a previous occasion when the Scotch had captured five English war vessels, King James sent his prisoners back to England with the message that he had as "manly men in Scotland as there were in England, and therefore he desired the English King would send no more captains on such errands."

This quixotic spirit of chivalry and generosity proved at last fatal to the King himself and disastrous to his people on the blood-stained field of Flodden in 1514.





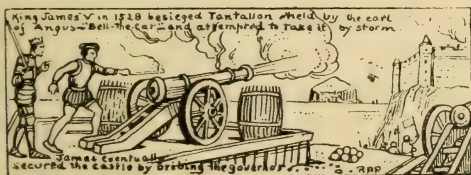
CHAPTER VIII.

THE DUKE OF SOMERSET'S INVASIONS.

During the reign of James V. there is no record of anything important happening at the Bass, although in 1528 the King in person was besieging Tantallon, then being held for his father-in-law, the notorious Archibald, Earl of Douglas, whom the King had relentlessly placed under outlawry.

With two great cannons, probably of the same size and pattern as Mon's Meg at Edinburgh Castle, called "Thraun-mouth'd Mow and her Marrow," and "two great bosards and two moyan, two double falcon, and four-quarter falcons," all of which were borrowed from Dunbar Castle, James attempted to take the castle.

But the governor, Simon Panango, was able to resist all attacks, and it was only by treaty that he afterwards surrendered the stronghold.



On the death of James, Henry VIII., of England, saw the opportunity of joining the two countries by the marriage of his son Edward and the infant Mary, the daughter of James. After long negotiations the Scots declined to enter into the treaty of marriage, and Henry in a furious rage declared war.

The following were the ferocious instructions issued to the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, who was appointed to the command of the army of invasion :

“ Burn down Edinburgh town, and raze and deface it, when you have sacked it and gotten what ye can out of it, as that it may remain for ever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God lighted upon it for its falsehood and disloyalty. Do what you can out of hand, and without long tarrying, to beat down and overthrow the castle. Sack Holyrood House and as many towns and villages about Edinburgh as ye conveniently can. Sack Leith, and burn and subvert it and all the rest, putting man, woman and child to fire and sword, without exception, when any resistance shall be made against you.”

The Earl of Hertford proved himself an adept in carrying out the savage orders of his most Christian majesty.

In the nine years' warfare that followed, besides the destruction of Edinburgh, Holyrood and Leith, many towns, manors, and churches were destroyed, and between two and three hundred villages were reduced to ashes. The ruins of the abbeys of Kelso, Melrose, Dryburgh and Coldingham still bear silent witness to the

ferocity with which the cruel orders of the reprobate King were carried out.

There were not wanting protests from some of the most enlightened men of the time. Erasmus, the most distinguished scholar in Europe, dared to write of "Kings who are scarcely men," and "of the madness of princes who destroy the cities which the people build, like ravenous birds pouncing with beak and claw on the land won by the wealth and knowledge of mankind."

Large fleets of vessels carrying soldiers and provisions and munitions of war passed up the Forth during those nine years, when Scotland lay prone before the spoiler.

Her navy appeared helpless or non-existent. The solitary Rock, the Bass, alone seemed able to maintain the national flag flying undaunted before the foe. The crews of the invading vessels must have looked with curious and wondering eyes at the strange, barren rock, with its multitudes of sea birds flying around in endless gyrations ; its cliff castle, with the four square towers, seeming as if they had grown out of the rock itself ; the red-tiled roofs of the governor's house and the garrison buildings appearing behind the battlements of the curtain walls that joined the towers and stretched across the island ; close at hand, too, at the water's edge they would have observed the small but effective barbican, with its four cannons peeping out of their embrasures, guarding the approaches to the lower terrace of the cliff where the crane stood for hoisting up visitors or supplies ; then they would have noticed the glittering points of the spears and helmets of the soldiers who silently gazed at the enemy's ships, passing in hundreds

before the breeze, or now and again breaking out into shouts of defiance ; and up on the top of the rock the Scottish Lion proudly floating in the wind. On the other hand, not less striking, though so different in character, would have been the sight presented to the eyes of the governor of the castle and his men.

They would have seen the sea, usually so free from sail or craft of any sort, covered with those beautifully shaped Tudor vessels, with their large swelling sails, many of them resplendent with gorgeously emblazoned coat-of-arms, and many flags and streamers fluttering from the masts, all bearing the national emblem, the Cross of St. George.



MAN OF WAR
Temp. TUDORS

They would have noticed the cannon peeping out of their embrasures along the gaily painted hulls, and the gangs of galley slaves pulling at the oars ; also they might descry the cruel faces of officers and men, the former in brilliant uniforms of the royal colours of

chocolate and green, with anticipated murder and rapine clearly depicted in their fierce glances and gestures. Behind, as a background to this pageant of naval war, would be seen the proud, strong towers of the Douglas stronghold, Tantallon, standing out on its rocky headland and flying alas ! not the national emblem of Scotland, but the cross of St. George, the flag of the enemy. For at this time the Douglas clan were deeply implicated in treacherous dealings with the despoilers of their country, and, like many others of the Reformation Lords, were actually in the pay of the English King, their vassals wearing his badge and livery.



The Duke of
Somerset.

It was during one of these invasions by the Duke of Somerset, as Hertford had now become, either in the year 1548 or 1549, that the first known attempt to capture the Bass Rock was made. Its advantage as a fortress commanding the entrance to the Forth, and forming an excellent basis of operations for the invaders had doubtless been noted by the English commanders.

Its capture by assault presented the very greatest difficulty, so a blockade was attempted. But the position of the Rock is too exposed for safe anchorage for any length of time, as the blockaders soon found out when the wind increased and their vessels were in danger of being wrecked on the rocky shore opposite. It was then decided to open negotiations with the garrison and try what cajolery or bribery might effect.

A captain, dressed in herald's uniform, being selected, was despatched in a light vessel to the Rock. He was allowed to approach the landing-place, but his request to speak with the governor was denied. He was told he might deliver his message openly. This he did, asking that one of the English leaders, who had advantageous offers to make, might be allowed to land and interview the governor. This also was curtly refused.

The herald, however, still persisted in his attempt and began to point out the weakness of the garrison, and the hopelessness of attempting to hold out against the English forces. He finished up his speech by offering to pay the governor five thousand nobles in ready money, and to the men three hundred each, with other lavish promises.

At this barefaced bribery, the governor, who had been listening to the parley, judged it time for him to interfere.

Coming forward, he addressed the herald, and telling him that though he did not think it strange for him to use such presumptuous language since it is usual for Englishmen to do so, yet he did not think Englishmen were such great fools as to think it possible for any man, laden with such a weight of gold, as you say, to climb up to a place that is accessible to birds only. "Besides," said he, "that same gold will be of much more use to you to provide for your defence against the King of France, your habitual master, than it can be to us who are accustomed to live on the provisions supplied to us by our birds." This very bombastic speech he concluded, by telling the herald to depart; or he would send him "to the devil," at the same time ordering his soldiers to open fire.

The herald then withdrew hastily, and a few hours afterwards the whole fleet weighed anchor and shaped its course towards the Isle of May.

Help at last came to the Scots from their old allies, the French, and the terrible period in which they had been so "burned, scourged, and punished" passed away.

Several French officers, de Termes de la Chapelle and others, who had accompanied the army of succour, under Monsieur de Dessé, visited the Bass Rock and other strongholds. They reported that they "had never sene in ony countrie so many strengthis to natour within ane prince's dominion as within the realme of Scotland."

Another Frenchman, Jean de Beaugué, who wrote an

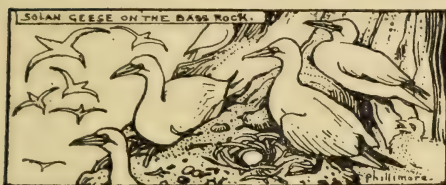
account of the French operations, especially that of the siege of Haddington, tells us that the Bass Rock was garrisoned by five or six score men, and that although at one time there had been a postern this had been done away with so as to secure complete impregnability, and the sole means of landing was supplied by a large basket attached to a crane.

It may be mentioned that in the present day, in stormy weather, the light-house men are hoisted up by means of a crane.

In the end the Scots found their allies, the French, somewhat of an embarrassment as they showed little disposition to depart.

Some years after peace had been made with England in 1558, a State document mentions the fact that they "commanded the country, not openly but as protectors, and that Edinburgh Castle and the Bass were the only strongholds held by the Scots themselves.





CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST OF THE LAUDERS.

The latter years of the sixteenth century saw momentous changes in the political and religious life of Scotland. By the Act of the Estates in 1560 the Revolution, known as the Reformation, was inaugurated, and the old ecclesiastical system with all its rites and ceremonies was suddenly overthrown.

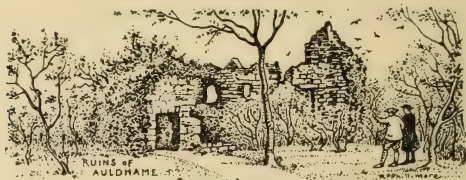
Heavy pains and penalties were decreed against any practising of the religion which had been for so many generations up to that moment the one faith of the Scots. The saying of Mass was forbidden on pain of forfeiture of goods for the first offence, banishment for the second, and death for the third.

This terrible act of tyranny was accompanied by wholesale confiscation of the lands and properties of the old church which the Reformation Lords did not scruple to appropriate to themselves on a very lavish scale.

Many places that had been accustomed to receive the services of the church were under the new dispensation considered unworthy even of "the humbler class of

officials, whose duty it was to read the Scriptures, and the simple prayers of Geneva prefixed to the Psalms."

From an entry in the "Buik of Assignations of the Ministers' and Readers' Stipends for the year, 1576," we find that no provision whatever was made for the spiritual needs of the governor and garrison of the Bass, or for the little village of Auldham on the shore opposite, of which there now remains only a few picturesque ruins.



The last religious service held on the Bass according to the "Statistical Account" was on the occasion when "a young lady in the presence of her father was here solemnly confirmed in her Romish faith and profession, and the due ritual services were gone through in the presence also of the keeper of the Bass and his boat assistant."

In this way the Bass Rock ceased to be associated with the religious purposes to which it had been dedicated since St. Baldred, many hundreds of years before, had there established his humble abode.

The little church for a time was desecrated by being used as a powder magazine, and was then allowed to fall into disrepair, and finally to the ruinous state in which it is now to be seen.

It was during this time of turmoil in church and state that a change in the family succession of the Lauders took place. In 1561 a second son, named, like so many of his ancestors, Robert, succeeded to the Bass and the East Lothian estates. At the same time a change was made in the coat-of-arms.



The griffin was retained on the shield, but instead of lions for supporters angels were substituted. For crest, a gannet sitting on a rock was adopted, with the appropriate motto, "Sub umbra alarum tuarum," Under the shadow of thy wings.

This member of the Lauder family was a devoted adherent of Queen Mary, and was in all probability a Catholic like his forefathers. Whether Queen Mary ever visited the Bass is doubtful. She was at Tantallon

in November, 1566, which was held in her interests by a son of the laird of the Bass.

Next year her husband, Lord Darnley, was murdered. Her marriage to Bothwell quickly followed. Then ensued the insurrection under the leadership of the Lords Morton and Home. Sir Robert Lauder, true to the traditions of his family, remained loyal to the Queen, and was with her at the surrender at Carberry Hill. For his adherence he received a summons from the Regent Moray and his Privy Council ordering him to deliver up "the house, fortalice, and Isle of Bass within forty-eight hours." But Lauder at first paid no heed, and it was not till next year, 1568, after the final disaster to the Queen's cause at Langside, that the island was given up. It is probable that Tantallon was surrendered about the same time.

The terrible Civil War followed, during which there appears to be no record of the Lauders taking any active part. And it is not till the reign of Queen Mary's son that there is anything to note in connection with the Bass.

In 1581 the young King, James VI., honoured George Lauder, the son of Robert, the friend of Queen Mary, with a visit to the Bass. This was done with considerable state and ceremony. There was a formal presentation of the keys of the castle, and the expenses of the visit, according to an entry in the treasurer's accounts, amounted to £40 of "Extraordinary expenses."

His Majesty was so pleased with the rock and the wonderful sight of the solan geese, that he made an offer to purchase it at any price the laird might name. Lauder, no doubt amused at the Royal enthusiasm, laughingly replied, "Your Majesty must e'en resign it to me, for I'll have the auld craig back again."

This visit of the King to the Rock seems to have resulted in important legislation referring to the solan geese and other birds, and appears to be the first of its kind. There seems little doubt that the Lauders had for years complained of the indiscriminate killing of the birds, which they claimed as their private property, by fishermen and others from the various sea towns of the Forth, the mode of capture being by baited hooks and nets. In an act of secret council in 1583 we get very full and interesting information. The Act begins by a statement as to how profitable the solan geese and other birds were "to the common weal of this realme, and how hurtful the slaying and destroying thair of are to the haill subjects of this realme." The Act also states that order and good policy require that "the benefite qlk God hes placit in ane realme for the weilfair of the haill inhabitants thereof suld not be certane privat, and invyious persons be impedit and destroyit." The fat of the birds was of marketable value, as a lubricant for cart wheels, and also for medicinal purposes.

To put an end to these depredations, the Act states that "his Majesty, with advice of the saidis Lordis of

his secret counsaill for the stancheing of lyk enormitie in tyme cuming, hes ordaint and ordainis all skeppairs and mariners of schipps or boittes, and every personis of whatsumevir, usaris of sick moyen ingyne and invention, for destroying and slaying of the said foulis and solane geis, to be callit and convenit befor the baillies of Dunbar, or utheris jugeis to be depute be Mr George Lauder, of Bass, and his successors, lairdis of Bass."

Heavy penalty was decreed against any persons found guilty. "Ilk ane of thame in the pane of twentie pundis toties quoties." Half the fine was to go to Mr George Lauder, the rest to his Majesty's treasurer.

The Act also provided that if the guilty persons were unable to pay the fine, they should be "wardit within the place of Bass, or any other pairt quhair the said Mr George or his saidis successouris sall pleis, during the space of ane zeir thairefter, upon their awin expenses, with full power and commission to saidis jugeis to direct preceptis in their awin names for calling and convening of the saidis personis afor thaim, and poynding of the guidis and geir of the personis contravenaris for the foirsaid-sowme."

Whether any persons were imprisoned on the Bass by Mr George Lauder for the crime of killing his solan geese or other birds is unknown.

Open proclamation of these orders was directed to be made at the market crosses of Dundee, Arbroath, Mon-

trose, St. Andrews, Crail, Anstruther, St. Monans, Wemyss, Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn, Burntisland, Aberdour, Inverkeithing, and other places on the north side of the Forth, and also at Southferry, Cramond, Leith, Fisherrow, Saltpans (Prestonpans) North Berwick, Dunbar, Skateraw, Eyemouth, and other places south of the Forth.

This Act of Secret Council was ratified by Act of Parliament in 1593.

That Lauder was in high favour at Court is also shewn by the fact that he was knighted on the occasion of the young King's marriage in 1590 to Anne of Denmark.

On the union of the two crowns in 1603 the event was celebrated in most loyal fashion by a bonfire on the Bass. After this for one reason or another the position of the Lauders became precarious, and what is curious we find in the succeeding reign of King Charles I. serious attempts being made by the King to dispossess the Lauders, who for so many generations had been in undisputed possession of the Rock, and had shewn such unvarying loyalty to the King and his predecessors. It is not surprising that the King's efforts to make good his "right" to the Rock in the Court of Session, and his instructions to the Lord President to prosecute his claim, ended in failure.

But the affairs of George Lauder, who appears to have been a son of Sir George, the friend of King James, were

in a desperate state, and in 1628 " the King's Majesty was informed that George Lauder, of Bass, and Dame Issobell Hepburne, Lady Bass, his mother, stood rebels at the horn, at the instance of several of their creditors, and that, in spite of this, they persisted in remaining within the craig of Bass, and presumed to keep and maintain themselves there for the purpose of eluding justice and execution of the law."

The King it appears imagined that this gave him another opportunity for prosecuting what he considered "his right " to the island. He gave orders for summons to be issued for the delivery of the Bass and the arrest of the " rebels," and their commitment to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. Dire penalty was threatened for any contempt of the Royal order.

It appears that George Lauder and his mother finally surrendered, and the Bass very shortly afterwards passed away from the family.

In this distressful manner the family which had held possession for a period of over six hundred years, and which had been so distinguished by sterling abilities and steadfast loyalty to church and King, at a period when these virtues were so often lacking to the Scottish baronage, ceased to be known under the proud territorial title of " Lauders of Bass."

In a M.S. collection in the Advocate's library there is an amusing anecdote relating to the Lauders, but as

the event occurred in 1650 it must have happened after the family had ceased to be lairds of the Bass.

The story relates to Maggie Lauder, who seems to have been the heroine of the popular song, "Maggie Lauder":

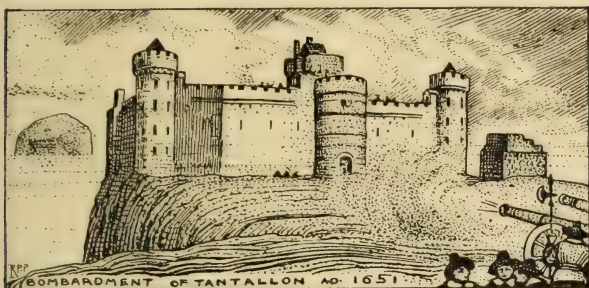
"I've lived in Fife, baith maid and wife,
These ten years and a quarter :
Gin ye should come to Anster Fair,
Speir ye for Maggie Lauder."

It appears the family were residents at North Berwick at the time of the story, which is to the following effect :

"There had been a tradition in the burgh of North Berwick, and county about, handed down to this time from father to son, that when Oliver Cromwell, that grand usurper, hypocrite, and great, wicked man, lay with his army encamped about Dunbar, before the Battle of Doonhill, that he had sent a party to North Berwick, where Sir Robert Lauder, then of Bass, had his house, with barn-yard and other office-houses. The party entered the barn, where the corn was sacked up, ready to be carried out to be sown. The party having offered to carry off the corn for the use of their master, the Lord Protector (as they called him), Sir Robert's servant went into the house and acquainted Mrs Margaret, alias Maggy Lauder, Sir Robert's sister, who had the management of his family and affairs. She immediately ordered the sharpest knife and flail to be brought to her, and went into the barn, where, after upbraiding the party, she ripped up the sacks, and managed the flail with such

dexterity, that she beat off the party: for which she most deservedly may be accounted amongst the greatest and most glorious heroines of that age. Sir Robert was obliged at that moment to abscond, because he was a loyalist as all of that and other families of that name have almost always been, and still continue."





CHAPTER X.

THE LAIRD OF WAUGHTON.

In 1649 the Bass came into the possession of Sir John Hepburn, of Waughton, a noted cavalier, and famous as a soldier, who had served with distinction under the great King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus.

The next year saw Charles II. crowned at Scone, and a few months afterwards Cromwell's army appeared in the Lothians.

The Scots government took immediate precautions to have the public records of the Church of Scotland placed in safe keeping. It appears that in previous times of trouble with the English the Bass Rock had been used as a place of security. Accordingly in April, 1651, a requisition was sent to the Laird of Waughton asking him to take into his keeping the public records. The laird, it seems, was himself in command of the Bass, and he "personallie most gladlie offered to receive them, promising his outmost care to secure the same from all

danger." The Laird also undertook the charge of the muniments, plate, and the more valuable plenishings belonging to the Earl of Buccleuch.

But such an active soldier was not content with a mere defensive attitude. He saw the advantageous position of the Bass at the entrance to the Forth for intercepting vessels carrying supplies to Leith for Cromwell's army. In these days transport was quicker and safer by sea than by land, owing to the bad state of the roads.

The Laird of Waughton therefore sallied forth from his stronghold whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself.

On one of these filibustering expeditions he succeeded in capturing "the John of London," with a cargo of boots, shoes, stirrups, and bridles, besides canary wine, strong waters, hams, tongues, and two trunks belonging to Oliver Cromwell.

This was considered such an important capture that the Lord High Chancellor sent orders to have an inventory drawn up of the goods.

It was, however, reported that the goods had been embezzled by the captors, and that it was impossible to find out what had been done with them—although it was alleged in a general way that the people of Anstruther had purchased a good many articles.

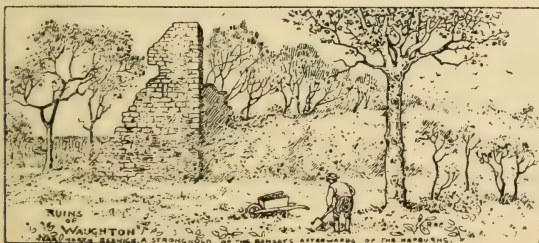
On their side the English took steps to defeat the depredations of the governor of the Bass, and proclamation was made in the towns on both sides of the Forth

forbidding all intercourse with the Bass Rock. Failure to comply with the order was to be punished by confiscation of goods, and trial by court-martial "as correspondents with the enemy."

One unfortunate mariner, Andrew Bennett, of Earlsferry, was brought to trial for supplying the enemy with provisions, but managed to escape punishment by pleading that he "was commanded in, and forced to submit to some of the enemy in the boat belonging to Bass island." His explanation was accepted. His boat and gear were restored to him.

After the final defeat of the royal cause at the "crowning mercy" of Worcester, a very stringent summons was sent to the governor of the Bass to deliver up to Captain Roleston "the Bass Island, with all the forts, fortifications, ordnance, arms, ammunition, provisions, magazines, and stores therein, for the use of the Parliament of England, to avoid the effusion of blood or destruction which may otherwise happen."

The day after this summons a party of horse, under Commissioner Desborough, proceeded to arrest the wife and brothers of the Laird of Waughton on a charge of supplying him with necessaries.



As the Castle of Waughton, of which only a very small fragment remains, was only a few miles from the coast, it was easy for them to do this.

They were sent on board the admiral's ship at Leith to be deported to London, if the Bass was not given up at once. Lady Waughton was in indifferent health at this time, and she wrote to her husband imploring him to surrender. But the Laird was not disposed to yield to such threats and he continued to hold out although he found an increasing difficulty in supplying his garrison with necessary food.

His difficulties became known to the Earl of Buccleugh who, alarmed for the safety of his plate and plenishings, took steps for their removal.

As the blockade of the Rock was rigidly enforced the only way Buccleugh could obtain his possessions was by giving Mr Smallwood, the chaplain to the Parliamentary army, then under the command of General Lambert, "25 double-pieces or 500 merks Scots." It appears the reverend gentleman managed to obtain a pass for "getting the chairter-kist wryttis and plenishing out of the Bass," and 720 pounds Scots were given by the Earl to Anderson, the servitor to the Laird of Waughton, for distribution as drink money to the garrison soldiers.

Another circumstance happened about this time which was not calculated to encourage Waughton and the garrison, and that was the sight of the bombardment of Tantallon Castle, and, after a siege of about twelve

days, its surrender to the army of General Monk. It was then dismantled, and left in the ruinous state in which it now remains. All the other "strengths" in Scotland had fallen into the hands of the Commonwealth, so towards the end of that year, 1651, the Laird of Waughton surrendered the Rock.

In acknowledgment of this important capture a letter was sent to Major-General Dean "for his good services in taking the Isle of Bass."

Orders were also sent that "Major-General Dean cause the public records of the Kirk, taken in the Isle, to be packed up in casks and sent to the Tower of London, there to remain in the same custody that the other records that came from Scotland are."

The Commonwealth Government recognising the military importance of the Bass Rock, as the key of the Forth, more especially at the time of the war with the Dutch, maintained a strong garrison there, and kept the buildings and fortifications in a good state of order and repair.

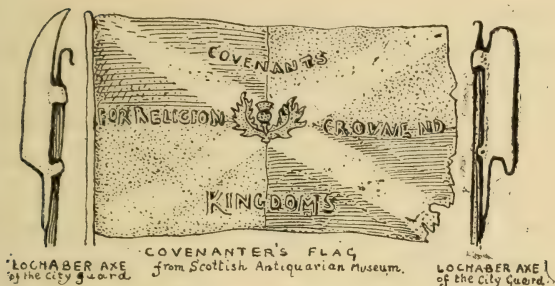
In 1657 it figures in a list of establishments that the Council gave allowances for fires and candles.

It was not long after these events that the Bass Rock again changed hands. The Lord of Waughton appears to have got tired of his possession, and disposed of it to Sir Andrew Ramsay, Lord Abbotshall, Lord Provost of Edinburgh. This gentleman, who is said to have got possession neither for a just price nor by the fairest

means, at that time was in considerable difficulties for money, being indeed on the verge of bankruptcy. He was a strong loyalist, and had extorted gifts from the city of Edinburgh for King Charles II., to the extent of £17,000. The Provost, who was a friend of the notorious Lord Lauderdale, managed to effect a sale of the Bass to Lauderdale on behalf of the Government for the exorbitant sum of £4,000, in 1671.

It was a remark of Sir George Mackenzie, "Bluidy Mackenzie," that they were "kind to each other at his Majesty's expense." Lauderdale got himself appointed "Captain of the Bass," and soon afterwards "Keeper of the Island." Finally he became "Governor of the Castle," the salary of the combined offices being £100 yearly.





CHAPTER XI.

PRISONERS FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE.

When King Charles II. found himself restored to the throne of his fathers he naturally desired to exercise the prerogatives and rights in church and other matters that had up to that time been associated with kingship. The Reformation in abolishing the Spiritual Head of the church and substituting that of the Monarch, had reverted to the ideas of classical times when the Emperor was looked upon as the religious as well as the civil head of the state.

Christianity itself had been established as the religion of Britain by an edict of a Roman Emperor—Constantine the Great.

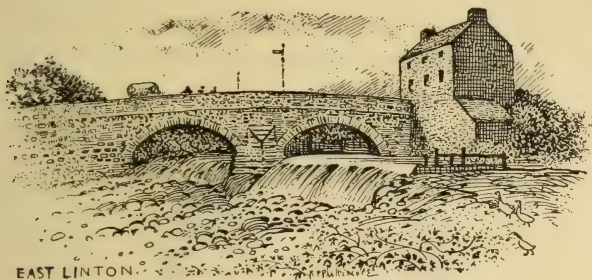
The Covenanting Lords of Scotland had ruthlessly suppressed the Roman Catholic religion by force of arms and penal laws applied systematically over a period of many years. The policy of Charles II. was not to change the doctrine or ritual, but merely to make an alteration in church government.

Neither Charles II. nor his advisers nor Presbyterians understood the growing strength of democratic ideas and the desire for freedom and independence. This probably partly explains why the changes, unimportant as they were from a doctrinal point of view, were met with such determined resistance, and which in turn excited the cruel measures adopted by the government for enforcing their system of prelacy. Under the Conventicle Acts the prisons of Scotland soon became filled with ministers and others who refused to obey the new church laws. New prisons had to be built, and it was at this time Lord Lauderdale made the purchase of the Bass, with a view to utilizing the garrison buildings as prisons for the covenanting resisters.

By the beginning of the year 1673 the buildings had been renovated, and on 2nd April of that year the first of the so-called "martyrs," a minister named John Gillespie, was sentenced to imprisonment on the Rock for the offence of preaching without being lawfully ordained. From that time till 1687 the Bass appears to have never been without its quota of prisoners, generally about a dozen or fifteen at a time, and the total number seems to have been 41, of whom 28 were ministers or preachers. Of these several are worthy of special mention :

Gilbert Rule seems to have been distinguished by his learning and ability, having been at one time Regent of Glasgow University, and afterwards Sub-Principal of King's College, Aberdeen. Then he became minister of

Alnwick where having acquired great fame for his éloquence and fervour, he came to Scotland at the request of the Earl of Haddington. For a short time he lived at East Linton where he was accustomed to preach at a meeting house at Linton Bridge.



His powers as a preacher may be judged from a remarkable story related of him when, in fear of capture, he lay in a deserted house in the Grampians.

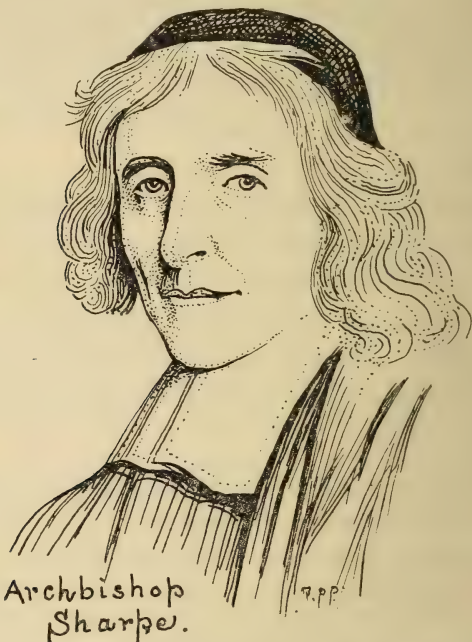
During the night a ghost appeared to him, and forcing him to leave his bed took him to a certain place not far off, and indicated in an impressive and tragic manner a certain spot.

So impressed was Rule by this extraordinary manifestation that next day he caused the place to be dug up, with the result that a human skeleton was revealed.

On the following Sunday he delivered a sermon to some of the people in the district, and spoke in eloquent and moving terms of the extraordinary way in which, what seemed like a terrible crime of years before, had been disclosed to him by Divine agency.

His sermon had an astonishing sequel. An old man of about 80 years of age suddenly "fell a-weeping before all the company, and acknowledged that at the building of the house, many years before, he had murdered the man whose skeleton had been just unearthed."

Having been suspended for irregular ministration, Rule was sent to the Bass, but only remained there about three months, being released on account of illness, and on a promise to leave the country.



Archbishop
Sharpe.

Thomas Hog, another minister of uncommon ability and influence, earned the distinction of suffering very rigorous treatment, at the special intervention of Arch-

bishop Sharpe with the other members of the Council, who were about to grant his petition for release on the grounds of ill health, made at the suggestion of the prison doctor. The Archbishop declared that Hog could "do more seated in an arm-chair than twenty of the other prisoners."

In some accounts of this episode it is stated that Hog was placed in an "underground dungeon beneath the bastion."

This, however, is obviously incorrect, as there is no underground dungeon beneath the bastion or anywhere else.

So far from any evil effect resulting to Hog from his being placed in the "closest prison" he rapidly recovered his health in his new quarters, and was wont to remark in after years in speaking of the event, "commend me to Sharpe for a good physician."

Another interesting prisoner was *James Fraser, of Brea*, son of Sir James Fraser, of Brea. In early years, like Bunyan, he had been pretty much of a reprobate; addicted to lying, thieving and swearing. After his sudden conversion, he took great delight in preaching, and soon found himself in collision with the authorities who arrested him on what were in those days very serious charges, preaching at conventicles, advocating the lawfulness of rising in arms against the King, and holding correspondence with the prisoners of the Bass.

This last was a capital offence. He soon found himself on the dread Rock, but seems, unlike most of the prisoners, rather to have enjoyed his two years' sojourn there. He devoted his time to the study of Hebrew and Greek, and wrote a Treatise on Faith and other matters. The company of the other ministers was very congenial to him, and he declared with satisfaction that he was kept out of temptation, and saved a considerable portion of his income by his enforced frugality. The fine sea air also was very conducive to his health, which, he declared, was never better than when on the Rock.

The most curious and eccentric personality amongst the prisoners was undoubtedly *Alexander Peden*, a minister, popularly known as "Peden the prophet." He appears to have been a quiet, harmless fanatic, with a belief in his powers of prophesying. One who frequently heard him preach says: "Every time he spoke, between every sentence he paused a little, as if he had been hearkening to what the Lord would say unto him, or listening to some secret whisper, and sometimes he would start as if he had seen some surprising sight."

One of his so-called prophecies was that the Stuarts would be thrust from the throne, that a last effort to retain their power would be made with the help of the French, that better times were in store for Scotland, and that Presbyterianism would be established. He is also said to have foretold the death of John Brown, of Priestlaw; "the Christian carrier," who was shot by Claverhouse.

Then there was the case of the young woman on the Bass who, laughing at and mocking the good man at his devotions one Sunday morning, was told, that "God would ere long work a sudden and surprising judgment on her, and she could not escape it."

Shortly after, a sudden gust of wind blew the poor girl into the sea.

The prophet's health becoming feeble, he was released from the Bass, and betook himself to the wilds of Galloway. There he led a most miserable life, "hid in a peat bog, sleeping under the wall of a sheep-fold, feeding on crumbs of bread or broken bannocks, and drinking the water of the burn."

One of his friends found him "lying in very low circumstances, overgrown with hair, and with few to take care of him, as he never took care of himself, seldom he unclothed himself these days, or went to bed."

But even when dead he was not allowed to rest. His body was dug up by order of the authorities, and buried at the gallows' foot at Cumnock.

John Blackadder, minister of Traquair, on the Act against Conventicles being passed, fled to Holland. He, however, returned to Scotland, and in 1681 found himself arrested and brought to the house of that terrible man, Sir Thomas Dalzell, of Binns, the Commander-in-Chief of the Scottish army.

"I have brought you a prisoner," said the town major, Johnstone. "Take him to the guard," replied Dalzell, who was about to walk forth. On this the poor prisoner, who on a later occasion was described by his son Adam as a "bold man," said timidly, "May I speak a little with you, sir?"

Dalzell, whose blood always boiled at the sight of a Covenanter, replied: "You have already spoken too much, sir, and I should hang you with my own hands."

On this the town major hurried his prisoner away, and it was not long after that Blackadder was a prisoner on the Bass Rock by order of the Privy Council, and here he remained till his death five years afterwards. His quarters were by no means agreeable. His cell was damp and smoky, often he had to put his head and shoulders out of the window to get fresh air.

We get a glimpse of Blackadder's somewhat aggressive disposition from the son's account of a visit to the Rock: "We went to the Bass where my worthy father was lying in prison, and had been there for some years. When we were going away (my father conveying us to the gate), the Governor bid me halt a little: he had something to say to me ere I went. 'What's the matter?' says I. 'You must hold up your hand and swear.' 'Oh,' says I, 'who empowered you to be a judge and impose oaths?' 'I have my orders,' says he. My father (who was a bold man), overhearing him, said, 'I protest, Governor; you are impertinent, sir, to trouble the young man with any-

thing of that nature.' To which the Governor answered, 'I profess, Mr Blackadder, sir, I'll commit both you and him close prisoners if I hear any more of your talk.' 'Content,' says my father, and then says to me, 'Come along with me, sir.' I thought with myself, 'I beg your pardon, father, not so long as I can do better.' Then I began to argue the matter with the Governor by telling him I was an utter stranger as to affairs in Scotland, and knew nothing about what was passing, which calmed him a little. At last he says, 'Well, sir, I will not trouble you at this time, but I assure you I have such orders, and that perhaps you will find ere you come the length of Edinburgh, for every sergeant and corporal may stop any man on the road.' So I thanked him, and came off and went to Edinburgh."

This shows the Governor, Charles Maitland, as a man of an amiable disposition, and hardly bears out the complaints of some of the other prisoners as to his tyrannical character.

Some time after this Blackadder made a request for release on account of infirmity, but was refused. A second application was granted, on condition of security being given "to live orderly." Unfortunately Blackadder died before the order could be carried out. The cell in which he breathed his last is said to have been on the Eastern Ramparts.

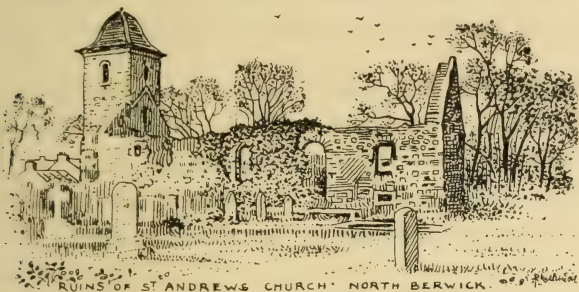
He was buried in the churchyard at North Berwick, where his tombstone with its ornate inscription may still

be seen on the east of the ruined church. The original epitaph was re-lettered in 1821, and is as follows :

“ Blest John, for Jesus' sake, in Patmos bound
His prison Bethel, Patmos Pisgah found :
So the bless'd John, on yonder rock confined—
His body suffer'd, but no chains could bind
His heaven-aspiring soul, while day by day
As from Mount Pisgah's top, he did survey
The promised land, and view'd the crown by faith
Laid up for those who faithful are till death.
Grace formed him in the Christian hero's mould—
Meek in his own concerns—in's Master's bold :
Passions to reason chained, prudence did lead—
Zeal warmed his breast, and reason cool'd his head.
Five years on the lone rock, yet sweet abode,
He, Enoch-like, enjoyed and walk'd with God :
Till, by long living on this heavenly food,
His soul by love grew up too great, too good
To be confined to jail, or flesh and blood.
Death broke his fetters off, then swift he fled
From sin and sorrow : and by angels led
Entered the mansions of eternal joy.
Blest soul, thy warfare's done ; praise, love, enjoy.
His dust here rests till Jesus come again—
Even so, blest Jesus, come—come, Lord—Amen.”

Two other ministers died on the Rock, *John Rea* and *John Ross*, both of whom had been strenuous opponents of the new laws, and had suffered imprisonment in various places. *John Rea* is said to have been buried beside *Blackadder*.

A Writer to the Signet, named *William Lynn*, also died on the Rock, and was buried in the churchyard at North Berwick in February, 1684. He had been fined



£500 for attending field conventicles, at which he had heard ministers who were declared traitors, and for corresponding with "rebels." The duration of his detention is unknown.

William Bell was a noted preacher. Imprisoned on the Bass in 1676 for preaching and discharging the functions of the ministry without regular license, he spent three years on the Rock, during which he is said to have suffered great privation. His independent spirit, however, was by no means quelled, for we find him some time after his release imprisoned in Blackness Castle, which was no doubt an even worse place of detention than the Bass.

John M'Gilligen was a minister who had been deposed by the Bishop of Ross. Condemned as a "rebel and outlaw," he was sentenced to the "limbo" of the Bass. This was evidently not to his liking, as he gave necessary security and obtained his freedom. But breaking his bond

and holding the forbidden conventicles, he found himself a second time in the "limbo" of the Bass. Being, however, "threatened with a serious illness," he a second time obtained his release, which may be taken as an example of leniency on the part of the Council.

Michael Potter, a minister, after an exile of seven years on the continent returned, and not long afterwards was arraigned before the Council and sent to the Bass. To regain his liberty, he promised to again leave the country, but this was modified on his promise to be "silent at home."

George Shields, a preacher, after imprisonment of fourteen months on the Bass was taken to Edinburgh and offered his freedom on condition of ceasing from preaching and "living orderly." But he refused these terms, and was locked up in the Edinburgh Tolbooth. Some time afterwards, however, he managed to obtain freedom by disguising himself in female attire.

John Stewart, a minister, was sentenced to banishment, but the verdict being reconsidered he suffered about 12 months on the Bass, being released in 1686.

Alexander Dunbar was a minister altogether irreconcilable. He was charged with "keeping conventicles, preaching seditious doctrines, harbouring rebels, and other public crimes and irregularities." Having also refused to take the oath to King James, he was sentenced to penal servitude in the Plantations. He was fortunate, however,

in having his sentence commuted to imprisonment on the Bass Rock. Here he served about a year's imprisonment, and was then released on the grounds of infirmity and impaired health, which may be certainly considered another example of leniency on the part of the authorities.

John Dickson, a minister, and a friend of Blackadder's, was a noted field preacher, and was present with Blackadder at the first armed conventicle on Beith Hill, Dunfermline. Both fled the country. On Dickson's return some time afterwards, he boldly resumed preaching in houses and fields. And although a price was set on his head of 1,000 merks, he managed to elude capture for some years. After Bothwell Brig, however, he fell into the hands of his enemies who forthwith sent him to the Bass. At the end of six years, his health being impaired, he was offered his release if he would cease from preaching. This he declined to do, and was ordered to be re-committed to prison, but with the mercy the authorities so often showed in the administration of the law, the order was not carried out. After the Revolution Dickson became minister of Rutherglen.

Only one man amongst those who were prisoners on the Rock had committed serious crime, this was a minister, *James Mitchell*, who had taken part in the Pentland rising, and had afterwards attempted to assassinate Archbishop Sharpe. The attempt failed, but Bishop Honeyman, who was with the Archbishop at the time, was wounded, and died some months afterwards as the result.

Mitchell was proclaimed, and condemned to have his right hand cut off. For some years he escaped justice; but, being eventually captured, he suffered the tortures of the "boot," and was then sent to the Bass Rock where he was kept a "close prisoner," not being allowed out of his cell like the other ministers.

Mitchell had been promised his life, but through the intervention of Archbishop Sharpe this was basely ignored, and Lord Lauderdale condemned him to death, saying, "Let Mitchell glorify God in the market-place."

Of those who were not in the ministry and suffered detention on the Bass there are several worthy of mention.

Major Joseph Learmont had been sentenced to death for the share he took in the battles of Rullion Green and Bothwell Brig. This had been commuted to perpetual imprisonment on the Bass, but his stay on the Rock does not seem to have been lengthy.

Two other notable prisoners, who had taken an active part in the rising at Bothwell Brig, were *Sir Hugh Campbell* and his son, *Sir George*. Sir Hugh had also been mixed up in the "Rye House Plot." Both were sent to the Bass Rock. The elder was released on account of indifferent health. Sir George, who was knighted in his father's life time, seems to have suffered two periods of imprisonment on the Bass. After the Revolution his estates, which had been confiscated, were restored, and he rose to the high legal position of Lord Justice Clerk.

George Scott, a gentleman, only suffered a few months' imprisonment for the crime of holding conventicles and "corresponding with the rebels." He secured his release by promising to "live orderly."

John Bennet, another gentleman, was imprisoned on the Bass for taking part in "armed conventicles," and for refusing to "wait upon the preaching of the curates," and also for refusing to forego the ministrations of one John Welch, a declared rebel and traitor. Prison life, however, did not suit this gentleman, and eventually he obtained his release by paying a fine of 4,000 merks Scots.

Robert Dick, a merchant, seems to have been one of the irreconcilable characters who, for frequenting "seditious" meetings on the Pentland Hills, suffered two years' imprisonment on the Bass, after which the Council, apparently irritated by his refusal to answer questions, banished him to the Plantations, and nothing more was heard of him.

A curious character was *Hector Allan*, a seaman and a Quaker, who being annoyed one Sunday by the minister of North Leith animadverting on the tenets of the "Friends," called out, "Friend, I would like to know by what authority thou doest these things?" The congregation resented this interruption, and Hector found himself brought up before the authorities, and charged with "abusing and railing upon" the minister. They sent him to the Bass where, however, he remained but a short time.

Only one schoolmaster appears as a "martyr" of the Bass. This was *William Spence*, who had committed the offence of teaching his pupils the doctrines of Presbyterianism, and attending the forbidden conventicles. After spending more than a year on the Bass, he complained of ill health, and petitioned for release. This was granted on his finding the usual securities.

A person one would not have expected to find amongst the prisoners was *John Philip*, the curate of Queensferry, one of the legal clergy. His offence, too, was a strange one, that of abusing high dignitaries of his own church. Perhaps his genuine sympathies were with the sufferers for conscience sake. He openly expressed his opinion that the Duke of York, the Bishop of Edinburgh, and the Lord Advocate were "bloody and cruel men." As if to justify the curate's opinion, the authorities passed the most vindictive of all their verdicts. He was sentenced to imprisonment on the Bass Rock for life, and fined £2,000

A Catholic priest, named *George Young*, also fell under the displeasure of the ruling powers, and was a Bass Rock "martyr," but the offence for which he suffered is unknown.

John Spreul was an apothecary of Glasgow on whom the authorities seem to have meted out specially hard terms. It appears he was suspected of having joined the rising at Bothwell. Refusing to make any admissions, the poor man was subjected to torture, which he bore heroic-

ally, making no confession. Charged with high treason, the jury returned a verdict of not proven. Still he was not released. A minor charge was got up against him for frequenting conventicles, and for this he was fined £500 and sent to the Bass where he remained six years. Spreul was a man of undaunted spirit, well liked by his neighbours, who gave him the nickname of "Bass John." Of this sobriquet and his trials he was quite proud, and assumed the motto, "Sub pondere cresco."

The following quaint epitaph commemorates his trials and sufferings—

"Bass John," his townsmen named him here,
 And we are told by them
 This title was to him more dear
 Than monarch's diadem.
 Great patient martyr! now we know
 The meaning of that crest.
 God's kingdom has been made to grow
 By men like thee distressed.

There was another John Spreul, Town Clerk of Glasgow, who had been banished and had resided for some time in Holland. He was a prisoner for about two years, being released on the grounds of infirmity and old age in 1685.

Of the various other persons who

"In the Bass dungeon strong
 Chanted Babel's captive song."

most of them only served short sentences, and nothing specially interesting or noteworthy is to be recorded!

concerning them. In most cases release could be obtained on a promise not to attend conventicles and to "live orderly." Prisoners were allowed to receive letters from outside, but such as came might be, and often were, opened by the Governor. They were also allowed to have their own servants to attend to their needs. Doubtless there were petty acts of tyranny on the part of the jailers, but Charles Maitland, the Deputy-Governor, seems to have been a man of humane disposition. In the discharge of his duties, he showed great zeal and initiative. On one occasion, seeing an assembly on White Kirk Hill,



he attempted to disperse it. The conventicle was a very large one, and Maitland, with forty soldiers, failed to intimidate the assembled multitude. His soldiers were opposed by some of the people, under the leadership of a man named James Learmont, of Haddington, who called out, "Let there be no cowards here this day, sirs, and let those who have arms go out foremost." One of the soldiers struck at the man, but was immediately felled to the ground by a countryman of powerful build. In the scuffle that ensued, one of the soldiers was shot, and the rest being surrounded were disarmed and betook themselves somewhat ignominiously to flight.

Learmont was subsequently arrested and brought to trial. It was proved that he was unarmed. Three times the jury were thrust back into the box to amend their verdict, and threatened with the "assize of error." Learmont was, of course, in the end condemned to the extreme penalty of the law, and was beheaded in the Grassmarket.

Before his execution he calmly protested his innocence, denied the charge of sedition and disloyalty, and exhorted the people to submit to the King and magistrates in all just and lawful commands, and declared his adherence to the principles of the Reformation.

From the confession of a dying man years afterwards, it was proved that Learmont was not the man who shot the soldier.

LIST OF PRISONERS.

MINISTERS.

Patrick Anderson.

William Bell.

John Blackadder.

John Campbell.

John Dickson.

James Drummond.

Alexander Dunbar.

James Fithie.

James Fraser of Brea.

Alexander Forrester.

Robert Gillespie (the first prisoner incarcerated).

John Greig.

Thomas Hog.

Peter Kid.

James Macaulay.

John M'Gilligan.

James Mitchell.

Alexander Peden.

Michael Potter.

John Rae.

Archibald Riddell.

Robert Ross.

Thomas Ross.

Gilbert Rule.

John Law.

Alexander Shields.

John Stewart.

Robert Traill.

John Philip, an Episcopal curate.

George Young, a Roman Catholic priest.

LAIRDS.

Robert Bennet of Chesters.

Sir George Campbell of Cessnock.

Sir Hugh Campbell of Cessnock.

Alexander Gordon of Earlston.

George Scott of Pitlochrie.

Major Joseph Learmont.

OTHER PERSONS WERE :

Robert Dick, Saltgrieve.

William Lin, Writer to the Signet.

John Spreul, Town Clerk of Glasgow.

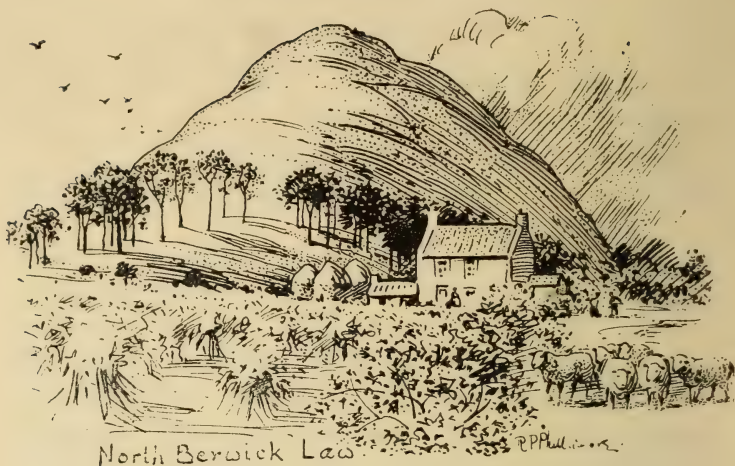
John Spreul, " Bass John," Apothecary of Glasgow (the last prisoner).

William Spence, Schoolmaster.

Hector Allan, a Quaker.

In his " Memoirs of the Rev. John Blackadder," Dr. Crichton mentions other persons whom he alleges were prisoners on the Bass, amongst them, Lady Gordon of Earlston, whose husband, as before mentioned, was incarcerated on the island, his stay, however, being only of a fortnight's duration. He was subsequently imprisoned in Blackness Castle, and there Lady Gordon was a voluntary prisoner with her husband for several years, and there wrote her " Soliloquies," which were published and appreciated in Covenanting circles.





North Berwick Law.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR CHARLES MAITLAND HOLDS THE BASS.

The end of the year 1688 was wild and stormy, and the waves dashed against the rocky sides of the Bass where the poor prisoners in their damp and gloomy prisons speculated on the rumours of coming deliverance from the yoke of the Stewarts.

A beacon had been set up on the Bass and on North Berwick Law and other places to give warning should the fleet of William of Orange appear in the Forth.

These beacons were never lit. William landed in the south, and the Government of King James collapsed.

The covenanting captives in the prisons all over Scotland suddenly found themselves free men. The skulls of the martyrs that had so long stood bleaching over the city gates of Edinburgh were hastily removed and buried out of sight.

During the twenty-eight years of the terror about eighteen thousand persons are said to have been in one way or another murdered or destroyed.

Great excitement prevailed in Edinburgh. James Drummond, Earl of Perth, Chancellor of Scotland, a timid and incapable man, who had been a convert to Romanism, fled from the city, and a reward of £400 was offered for his capture, dead or alive.

The Earl managed to escape unobserved to Burntisland, where he obtained a small sloop, himself disguised in woman's habit, and his countess in man's apparel. The intention, of course, was to escape to France. But the identity of the fugitives had been discovered as they passed Kirkcaldy, and a man named Wilson, who had been a buccaneer, anxious to capture such a valuable prize, put out in a war-boat, manned by 36 sailors fully armed.

The chase was not a very long one. As they approached the Bass, the war-boat drew level with its prey, and just opposite the castle of that island, of which Perth was the Governor, and whose deputy, Sir Charles Maitland, must have witnessed this exciting event, the fugitive was seized in his disguise, brought back to Kirkcaldy, and thrown like a common felon into prison.

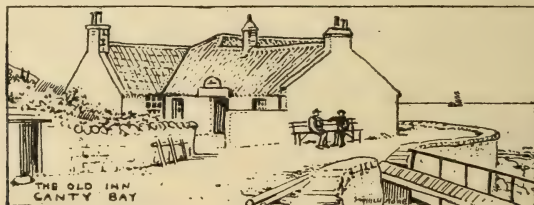
It was more than four years before the Earl recovered his liberty.

The capture of the Earl did not deter his deputy, Sir Charles Maitland, from holding on to the Rock as long as he could, with a garrison of very probably less than fifty men.

Sir John Dalrymple wrote to Lord Melville, Secretary of State, advising that if the Governor were willing to surrender he should be indemnified for life and fortune. He pointed out the opportunities the garrison had of holding out successfully by making raids on the merchant shipping passing up and down the Forth, reminding him also that the solan geese and other birds would go far towards supplying them with food.

Melville, however, rejected this wise advice, and would offer no terms except granting Maitland his life. Peremptory orders were sent to the Bass for its immediate surrender, but as Maitland took no notice of these he was declared "a fugitive, and intercommuned."

Active measures were taken to institute a blockade, and for this purpose a Captain Archibald Dunbar and a section of twenty men, including a corporal and a drummer, took up their quarters at Castleton, near Canty Bay, and where no doubt they found the little inn, which has since been replaced by a larger building, very convenient and comfortable.



Dunbar had every inducement to prosecute the blockade with vigour, as he had been recommended for the post of Deputy-Governor of the Bass by the Commander-in-Chief, Major-General Mackay.

Similar precautions were taken on the Fife Coast, the headquarters of which were at Anstruther. Maitland's obstinate resistance seems to have been quite unlooked for by the Government, and the Council began to see the wisdom of offering better terms.

An indemnity was promised, and when this failed an offer of three months' pay. Favourable as these terms were, they were refused. Yet the Governor's difficulties were increasing day by day, as the blockade by Captain Dunbar made it difficult to raid the coast and get sufficient supplies for his men.

Towards the close of 1690, the gallant Captain realised that his position was desperate, and surrendered unconditionally. Of his fate we have no record.

Captain Dunbar was after all disappointed in his hopes of getting the Deputy Governorship.

It appears that the new Government had appointed Henry Fletcher of Saltoun, Governor of the Bass. He was a brother of the famous Andrew, "the patriot," whose influence with King William had doubtless secured him this favour.

Henry Fletcher was considerably perturbed when he found that Dunbar had been recommended to the King by Major-General Mackay, and that he was to have a

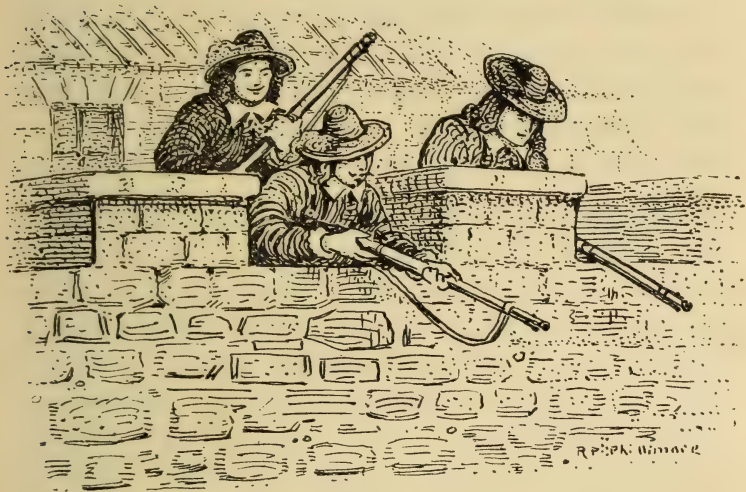
commission and pay as Captain, and thirty-six men in his company.

He complained to Lord Melville, and said if he were deprived of the "small advantages," which had hitherto always gone to the Governor, that is, "of the recommending of a deputy and of the modelling and payment of the garrison, his emoluments would be restricted to the mere profits to be derived from the island itself, and these, in his predecessor, the Earl of Perth's time, had been farmed out, sometimes at one thousand, but more commonly at nine hundred pounds Scots—so mean a thing as not to be worth the acceptance."

Fletcher had good grounds of complaint, but he was ungenerous enough to go out of his way to attack the character of Dunbar, accusing him of neglecting his duty during the blockade of the Bass, and spending most of his time in Edinburgh, also recalling the fact that he had been a servant of the Jacobite, General Dalziel, and was, moreover, incapacitated from active service owing to his suffering from the "falling sickness."

In the end the influence of Fletcher prevailed, and Wood took over the duties of Deputy-Governor of the Bass, then destitute of prisoners, with apparently every prospect of a quiet tenure of office.





CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTURE OF THE BASS BY JACOBITE OFFICERS.

It was shortly before the surrender of the Bass Rock by Sir William Maitland, early in the spring of 1690, to the Government of King William that the exiled King James sent General Buchan, an officer of reputation, who understood the Highland character and disposition, to try and rekindle the resistance of the clans which had been practically extinguished by the death of Dundee at the battle of Killiecrankie and the subsequent repulse of the Highlanders at Dunkeld under his successor, General Cannon. Buchan soon succeeded in collecting about eighteen hundred men, and in the month of April, 1690, commenced to march south. But Sir Thomas Livingstone,

a capable old officer of King William's, with a large force of cavalry, some infantry, and a body of the Clan Grant which had joined the cause of King William, marching from Forres, succeeded in surprising and killing the out-posts of the Jacobites, and attacking the General and his army asleep at Cromdale on the Spey.

The Highlanders made a gallant but ineffectual resistance, and were soon dispersed, most of the survivors escaping with remarkable agility in the mist of the early morning amongst the woods and hills. This battle was fought on May 1st, 1690. Amongst the few prisoners taken were four Catholic officers, Middleton, Hallyburton, Roy, and Dunbar, who were at once sent under guard to the Bass Rock to occupy as prisoners of war the cells lately occupied by the Covenanters. Here they appear to have been allowed liberty to wander about the island, or at least the portion behind the fortifications.

Governor Fletcher had little idea of the desperate and reckless character of his prisoners.

On the 15th June, 1691, only a few weeks after their arrival, during the temporary absence of the Governor and part of the garrison at Castleton on the opposite shore, a vessel with coal for the fort drew up at the landing-stage, and soon all the remaining men of the garrison were busily engaged in the task of unloading. Whilst thus engaged the three prisoners suddenly overpowered the sentry, shut the gates, and appeared on the battlements with muskets in their hands.

To the bewildered men of the garrison they shouted peremptory orders to quit the Rock. Taken thus by surprise the men were completely helpless, and had to obey the orders of their late prisoners and ignominiously depart in the coal boat and report to Saltoun the loss of the fortress.

As soon as this astonishing exploit became known, the jubilant friends of the Jacobite cause sent off to the Bass ammunition and supplies, and soon after some sixteen recruits joined the insurgents, amongst whom was a gentleman named Crawford with his servant and two Irish seamen.

Wild and hopeless as the scheme of the young officers seemed to be, it infused hope into the heart of the poor exiled monarch. So important did their enterprise appear that James managed to send them a vessel with supplies and stores, and two boats, "one that carried two pattararoes, twelve muskets, and rowed with twelve oars, and a smaller boat."

Altogether they appear to have numbered about sixteen men, and with this force they soon commenced active operations on behalf of "the King over the water."

Following the example of Sir Charles Maitland, they began sallying forth in their boat and attacking unsuspecting merchant vessels, or landing on the coast and helping themselves to such stock as they could conveniently carry away from the farms.

One of their exploits was the seizure of a vessel laden with salt, from which they took what they needed. For the vessel and the rest of the cargo they exacted a ransom from the owners. They also plundered a Dutch dogger, which, ignorant of what had happened, came within range of the guns of the fortress.

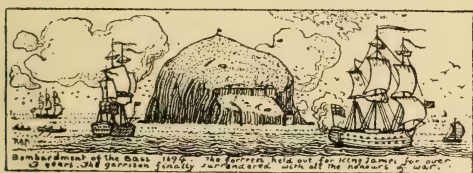
On another occasion they had an exciting and dangerous experience. Having held up a ship laden with wheat, they made for the Bass with their prize. But the wind suddenly changing, they found themselves driven northwards, and eventually had to run their vessel ashore on the coast of Montrose. They managed to land and escape capture, and, dispersing, attempted to get back to the Bass. It appears, however, that five of the party, Captain Alexander Hallyburton, Captain William Frazer, Mr William Witham, and Mr William Nicolson, fell into the hands of the enemy. They were taken to Edinburgh, and brought to trial, and, as was to be expected, condemned to be hanged as rebels. The sentence, however, does not appear to have been carried out.

The loss of their companions made little difference to the remainder of the gallant defenders. They continued their raids as before. From the mainland they got what coal they needed for winter supply, and the flocks of the farms supplied them with mutton and poultry. They even raided the May Island and carried off a few of the sheep; which in those days were kept for the lighthouse keepers.

The Government and their military advisers were perplexed and powerless. The small guards they established on the opposite coasts of Fife and Haddingtonshire were only partially effective. King William was especially annoyed that a few desperadoes should thus continue to defy his Government. He declared the island must be taken, even if it cost "the whole revenue of the kingdom."

At last two frigates, one of sixty and the other of fifty guns, were ordered to bombard the castle.

They lay off the Bass for two days battering away at the Rock, but the cliff-built towers were too high up for the guns of the vessels to be aimed at the necessary elevation. So no damage whatsoever was suffered by the garrison. On the other hand, his Majesty's ships had several seamen killed, their rigging and sails cut and riddled with cannon balls.



Indeed it is said the cost of repair to the Treasury of Scotland was £500.

After the siege had been going on for over two years, in August, 1693, a small war-vessel named the "Lion," with a dogger of six guns and a large boat from Kirkcaldy, was sent to carry on the blockade of the island.

But when a French man-of-war of twelve guns hove in sight, the "Lion" and the Kirkcaldy boat rather ignominiously retired. The two countries were at war at this time, and the French had been prevailed on to send help to the Jacobites. The French ship anchored under the guns of the Rock, and was allowed to furnish the garrison with the supplies they needed.

The gallant islanders were also about this time gratified by a letter from King James. This was addressed to Captain Michael Middleton. The Royal satisfaction was expressed at the zeal and loyalty of the faithful subjects, and enquiries were made as to the behaviour of the garrison, and details as to any disorders. It was announced that further provisions and supplies would be sent.

On the other hand, the authorities were unremitting in their efforts to put an end to a state of affairs that was becoming intolerable and a serious annoyance to the people of Fife and Lothian.

Instructions were sent to the various villages and ports to co-operate with the Government in carrying on a rigorous blockade. Dunbar seems to have zealously carried out its duty in this matter, as we read in a letter from the Chancellor thanking the magistrates for their diligence, especially in connection with seizing a vessel bearing coals to the Bass, and obtaining information that led to further arrests.

Finally it was made a capital offence for anyone to have any dealings with the men on the Bass.

One unfortunate wretch, named Trotter, who had ignored the penalty, had been caught near Whitekirk.

After enquiry and trial, he was speedily condemned to death. As showing how desperate the situation appeared to the authorities, the poor delinquent was ordered to be taken to the nearest point on the shore opposite the Bass, and there hanged in sight of the island as a terrible warning of the intentions of the Government.

This barbarous sentence was actually carried out. Trotter was taken to a field on the west of Tantallon, a gibbet was set up, and a crowd of people assembled to witness the execution. But just before the final arrangements, Captain Middleton, who doubtless through his spy-glass saw all the details of these proceedings, ordered one of his cannon to be fired at the assembled people. The shot appears to have been so well aimed that the executioner, prisoner, and crowd hastily dispersed.

But the gallows was again re-erected out of reach of the cannon, and poor Trotter suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

The field in which he suffered has since borne the name of "Gallow rigg."

The winter of 1693-4 was a trying one, being cold and bleak, and Middleton and his men, bold and sanguine

as they were, must have had an exceptionally hard time of it.

In the Spring, however, they were cheered by another letter from King James, announcing that he had been informed of the scarcity of provisions from which "our garrison" suffers, and that fresh supplies had been ordered, also that Major Robert Middleton had been sent so that his "experience will be both a help and comfort to you," and that he would "conjointly manage all things to the best for our service, by keeping the garrison in union and discipline, and encouraging all our subjects under your command to stand firm to their duty, letting them know they may assure themselves of a due reward of their services and sufferings whenever we shall be in a condition to do it."

Captain Michael Middleton was also instructed to make incursions on "our rebel subjects" whenever they could conveniently do so without endangering the loss of the garrison.

As showing how truly solicitous the poor exiled monarch was for the welfare of the few men risking their lives on his behalf, he took steps to supply them with religious ministration.

In his letter he says the "King's treasurer" has been ordered to pay "110 Livres for Mr Nichol's expenses, who was to perform the duty of priest to the garrison by administering to the Catholics all the spiritual assistance

that is incumbent to his functions." Whether the priest and Major Robert Middleton reached the island does not appear. But about this time a small privateer arrived at the Rock from Dunkirk, laden with food and other much-needed necessities. It was found, however, that the garrison was so reduced in numbers that there were not enough hands to work the crane and hoist up the supplies. The privateer had therefore to land ten sailors for this purpose. Unfortunately, when only seven bags of rusks had been hoisted up, the "Lion" hove in sight, and, to escape being run down, the Dutchman cut her cable and sailed away, leaving ten of her men on the island.

On this occasion the guns of the fortress seem to have been ineffective.

The condition of the garrison was now worse than before, as they had ten more men to feed, and only seven bags of rusks to add to their limited supply of food.

As the Dutch vessel seems to have been unable to get to the rock again on account of the watchful Captain Bird of the "Lion," the garrison were put on the very short allowance of two ounces of raw rusk in twenty-four hours.

Captain Middleton now began to realize that he was at the end of his resources, and that the Jacobite cause was hopeless. A flag of truce was therefore hung out, and the Authorities were informed that the Governor of the Bass would be willing to consider terms of surrender. This was in April of 1694.

A Major Reid and two members of the Council at once took ship for the Rock to have a personal interview with the redoubtable Captain. That resourceful man, before admitting his visitors and allowing them to realize the paucity of their numbers and their destitute condition, caused a number of hats, coats, and great coats to be cunningly disposed about the fortifications, so as to give his visitors the impression that his forces were quite ample to continue a vigorous defence for an indefinite time longer.

A few bottles of the best French wine and brandy and some good biscuits, which luckily remained in the possession of the Governor, were ostentatiously brought out and placed before Major Reed and the two commissioners with an invitation to partake freely, as they had an ample stock of supplies.

The gallant Major and his two companions were completely taken in. After enjoying their cake and wine banquet, they returned to Edinburgh and made their report as to the flourishing condition of things on the Bass Rock, and the resolute attitude of the Governor.

The Council were duly impressed, and lost no time in agreeing to the whole of the terms on which Middleton announced he was willing to give up the fortress. The terms of the articles were the following :

1. That the garrison should come ashore with their swords about them : that there should be a ship

appointed by the Government with fresh provisions to transport such of them as were willing to go to Dunkirk or Havre de Grace : and that in a month after the surrender those who pleased to stay at home might live without disturbance.

2. That all they had taken, and what belonged to them after they surprised the place, they should be allowed to dispose of to advantage, together with their boats, and all things pertaining to any of them.
3. That such of them as should incline to go abroad might stay in Edinburgh until the ship was ready, without molestation, and have so much a day according to their several stations.
4. That all who had belonged to the garrison, or had aided or assisted it, should have the benefit of the capitulation ; that those who were dispersed over the kingdom should have time to come in ; and that those who were condemned, in prison, or otherwise distressed, should be set at liberty the same day the garrison should come ashore, without any fees or other charges whatsoever.

Thus with all the honours of war, Captain Michael Middleton and his gallant men marched out of the Castle of the Bass.

This memorable siege had lasted nearly three years, from 18th June, 1691 to 18th April, 1694.

John Hill Burton, the eminent Scottish historian, says that the idea of these young officers, in seizing the Bass and leading a semi-piratical life, seems to have been an imitation of the adventures of Prince Rupert and his followers in the Scilly Islands. He also remarks that the episode affords an instructive proof of the slight progress then made in the art of marine sieges of fortified places.

It is singular also that in this siege and in the previous ones we do not hear of the garrison supplying themselves with food from the vast numbers of sea birds with which they were surrounded.

This extraordinary adventure brings to a close the history of the Bass Rock as a place of military importance.

Soon after the surrender the Government decided that the fortifications should be dismantled and the ordnance and ammunition removed. This decision, however, was not carried out till 1701.

One old gun still remains on the Rock, and the last occasion on which it was used was merely to fire a salute in honour of King George IV. when he passed by on his visit to Edinburgh in 1822.

There were several guns on the island at the time, and these were under the charge of John Martin, a vintner of North Berwick, who had in his younger days served in the Royal navy, and had accompanied Sir Edward Parry on his famous voyages to the Arctic regions.

In 1706, Sir Hew Dalrymple obtained a grant of the Bass, but the crown reserved the right of fortifying it should the necessity arise.

For 200 years after the dismantling of the fortress the Bass Rock remained uninhabited, save for the sea birds and a few sheep.

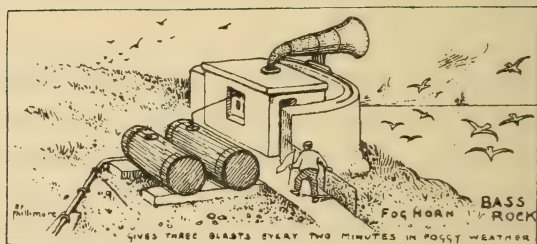
On December 1st, 1902, it assumed a new role, when the newly erected lighthouse first flashed its rays over the waters, which on that night were lashed into fury by a strong east wind which sent the foam many feet about the tower. This was erected on the site of the building that had for centuries been the island home of the Governor of the fortress.

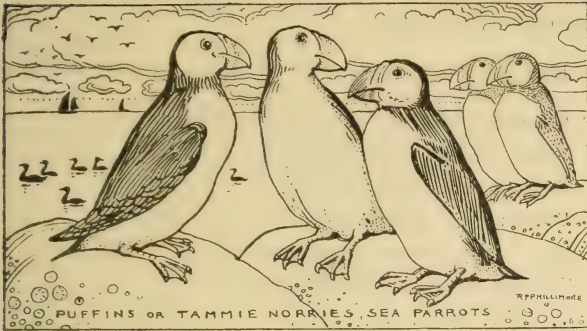
The light has a power of 38,000 candles, being produced by a paraffin lamp provided with five circular and concentric wicks. Alternating periods of darkness and light are regulated by the revolving glass cage, which completes its revolution in thirty seconds, giving six flashes. The apparatus has to be wound up every half hour, and consumes 2,000 gallons of oil yearly.

Each of the four keepers has a period of four weeks' duty and a fortnight on shore, so that three men are always in charge of the lighthouse. To bring supplies, the steamer "Pharos" arrives every fortnight.

The fog-horn situated on the northern side of the Rock completes the arrangements made for warning the home-

coming mariner of the dangers of the Peffer sands and the treacherous rocks of Scougall which have been so fatal to shipping in times gone by.





CHAPTER XIV.

FEATHERED INHABITANTS.

Supremely interesting as the Bass is from the historical and traditional associations connected with it, to the lover of nature and the ornithologist it presents even greater attraction as one of the most important breeding places of sea fowl in the British islands.

Its proximity to the shore renders it more accessible than those other places such as Ailsa Craig in the Firth of Clyde ; Suliskerry, west of Stromness ; Sullam, near Lerwick ; or that most wonderful haunt of all, Stack Lü, an uninhabited island about four miles from St. Kilda, and about 60 miles from the mainland.

Besides the sea birds that haunt the Bass, vast numbers of small birds, redpolls, golden-crested wrens, fieldfares,

redwings, thrushes, woodcocks, and many others, during the migratory season, make the rock a place of rest or refuge from the storm.

The habits of migratory birds is still little understood.

“ Amusive birds ! say where your hid retreat
When the frost rages and the tempests beat :
Whence your return, by such nice instinct led,
When spring, soft season, lifts her bloomy head?
Such baffled searches mock man's prying pride.
The God of nature is your secret guide ! ”

It seems that in April and May an innumerable number of small land birds take their flight to the North, to the Arctic regions, where, during the nightless summer, the air is so thick with mosquitoes that it almost loses its clearness and transparency. Attracted by this unlimited supply of food the birds remain in a paradise of sunshine, rearing their young until the cold season sets in, when they migrate to warmer zones.

But these small birds are but very temporary and casual visitors to the Bass. It is with the sea fowl that we are mostly interested. Besides the solan geese, large numbers of guillemots, razorbills, puffins, shags, terns, and the various sorts of gulls, congregate on the rocky cliffs of the Bass. Occasionally the stormy petrel visits the rock, and has been known to there make its nest.

The numbers of solans is of course very great. Some naturalists say about eight thousand, whilst others mention as high a figure as thirty thousand.

The earliest description of the solans seems to be that of the poet, Dunbar, in the reign of James IV., who well described the feathered tenants of the Bass in the lines often quoted :

“ The air was dirkit with the fowlis,
That cam with yammeris and with yowlis,
With shrykking, skrymming, scowlis,
And meikle noyis and showtes.”

William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who appears to have been the first scientist to visit the rock, gives a very good description of the general appearance of the island. Writing in 1661, he says : “ The surface of the island in the months of May and June is almost completely covered with nests, eggs, and young birds, so that you can scarce find free footing anywhere ; and then such is the density of the flight of the old birds above, that like a cloud they darken the sun and the sky ; and such the screaming and din that you can scarce hear the voice of one who addresses you. If you turn your eyes below, and from your lofty stance and precipice regard the sea, there you will perceive on all sides around an infinite variety of different kinds of sea-fowl swimming about in pursuit of their prey : the face of the ocean is very like that of a pool in the spring season, when it appears swarming with frogs. If you sail round the island and look up, you see on every ledge, and shelf, and recess, innumerable flocks of birds of almost every size and order ; and if you regard the flights that

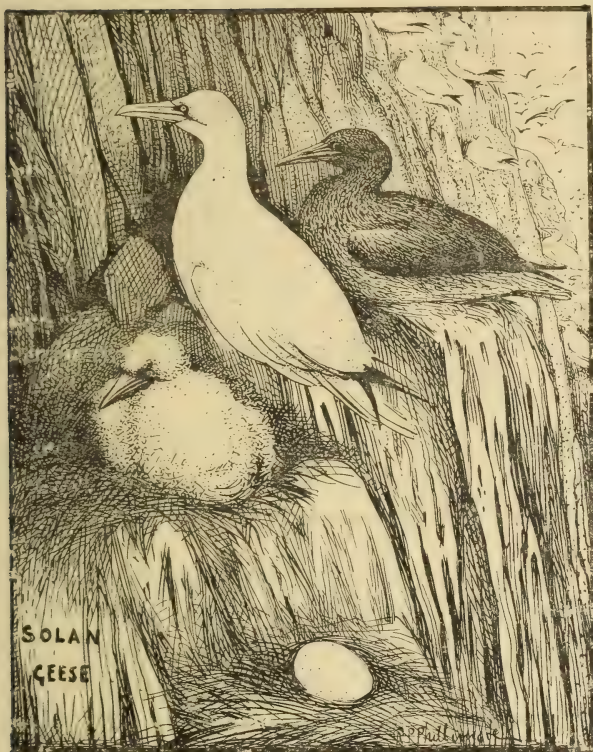
incessantly come and go you may imagine that it is a mighty swarm of bees you have before you. I should scarcely be credited did I name the revenue which was annually derived from the feathers, the eggs, and the old nests, which, as useful for firing, are all made objects of traffic by the proprietor: the sum he mentioned to me exceeds credibility."

From an estate account of the year 1764, it appears that over 1,200 birds were taken during the season and were sold for 1s 8d each, the total amount realized being £118. Ten gallons of oil, "drawn from the fat of the fowls," brought in £2 13s, whilst 10 stone weight of feathers realized £5.

The climber of the Bass received £5, which, considering the dangerous nature of the employment, was poor pay, more especially as the account states, "they take solan geese 36 times in the season." To seven men "for catching the fowls," a sum of £9 6s 8d is entered.

The method adopted was for the climber to be lowered over the cliffs by a rope, and then with a hook or stick he knocked the birds off the rock to be picked up by men in a boat waiting below.

The statement made by Harvey that the old nests were used as fuel by the keeper of the Bass corroborates to a certain extent what Hector Boece, Canon of Aberdeen, asserted in the year 1526.



The worthy canon declared that the nests were made of sticks and boughs, which "do satisfy the keeper of the castle for the yearly maintenance of his fuel, without any other provision."

As a matter of fact the nests are only made of grass and seaweed and miscellaneous rubbish.

The Canon, too, was quite incorrect as to the manner in which the solans feed their young. He asserted that having caught any fish they "hold it in their beak or talons, yet if they happen, as they fly towards land, to espy a better, they let the first fall again into the sea, and pursue the latter with great and eager swiftness, until they take hold thereof."

The real fact is that the solans swallow their prey under water, and are quite unable to carry fish or anything else in beak or "talons."

But the most extraordinary and fantastic statement of this ancient writer was as to the origin of the solans, and in his own words is to the following effect: "I learn that their ingendrure is rather to be referred to the sea than to anything else, if my conjecture be oughts, for although that they are in sundrie wise produced, yet I find the same to be performed continuallie in the sea, and not elsewhere as shall appeare hereafter. All trees cast into that element in process of time become worm-eaten, and in the holes thereof are the wormes to be found, though verie little and small (in comparison to that they

be afterward) to be perceived at first. In the beginning these worms doo shew their heads and feet, and last of all their plumes and wings. Finallie, when they are come to the just measure and quantitie of geese, they flie in the aire as other foules doo."

Believing all this he might well exclaim: "Certes, there is nothing in this rocke that is not full of admiration and woonder."

These absurd statements of the old annalist may be fittingly contrasted with the interesting accounts of the life-history of the gannet by a modern contributor to the local press, the well-known "J. M. C.," who must surely be the greatest living authority on the subject.

The following interesting and vivid account of the peculiar wooing of the solan appeared in his "Notes from the Bass Rock":

"Though it is not as yet actually proved that solans mate for life, there is reason for believing that this is the case. As a general rule, on their arrival they are already mated, as evidenced by their alighting in pairs, with the usual interchange of friendly greetings and a ferocious attitude towards their next-door neighbours. Exceptions, however, are to be seen in young birds nesting for the first time or those who, through some misfortune, have lost their partners and, nothing daunted, are again in the matrimonial market. Selecting a vacant ledge on the densely populated cliff face, the female awaits develop-

ments. From amongst the crowds that wheel in front, as if by prearrangement, a male bird darts to join her, and strikes the rock face a few inches overhead with a sounding crash, sufficient, one would think, to break every bone in his body. Both birds are instantly locked by each other's bills, and with outspread wings and bodies flattened to the rock, a tug-o'-war begins, the male bird apparently trying his best to pull the other off the ledge. Both sexes are similar in plumage and nearly indistinguishable, and only by actual observation are we, by inference, able to determine which is which. Consequently, their attractions being equal, there is no attempt at "displaying" on the part of the male as in the case of many birds, notably the blackcock, who struts and flaunts his fineries for the conquest of his more soberly clad females. As the tug-o'-war proceeds, they struggle and twist over each other like a pair of enraged cats, their grip at times changing to the throat, the skin being stretched to an alarming extent. No attempt is ever made to spear each other, though this would certainly be their most deadly means of offence. Minutes at a time may elapse without either bird making a move or relaxing its hold. Then with a sudden twist grips are lost, fresh ones as quickly taken, and the struggle renewed as furiously as ever. A careless wing dangling over the ledge is instantly seized and worried unmercifully by the occupants of the ledge immediately beneath, without in the least distracting the attention of the owner. Occasionally both birds topple over the ledge and fall

headlong to the sea some 200 feet below, without relaxing their hold of each other. Others separate in mid-air, while sometimes one is unfortunate enough **in** its descent to get caught by the leg in a projecting fissure. After continuing for hours, the inevitable result of these battles is a gradual weakening of attack on both sides and a final halting in the middle of a charge with distended bills, followed by a ludicrously solemn wagging of the head as if to say "enough." A few repetitions of this, and both birds are whetting their bills on each other in perfect amity. The whetting of bills is their most pronounced form of endearment, and grotesquely suggestive of the manner of expressing friendship by rubbing noses. Indeed, the whole transaction is strongly reminiscent of the methods of primitive man in clubbing a recalcitrant bride who dares to evince the slightest lack of affinity for her future lord and master."

In another contribution the same writer gives us an excellent account of the feeding of the young. He tells us the earlier stages of the operation are never seen, and "presumably take place during the night time. Only when the young are well advanced and an exceedingly healthy appetite has been developed, calling for more frequent attention, do we see the operation take place. A week or so before flight the young solan is quite as large as the parent birds whose resources are then severely taxed in satisfying their bulky offspring's inordinate appetite. Little wonder that the family is restricted to one only! A full-grown mackerel or herring is to the

young solan as "a minnow tossed to a cat." Tapping with the bill on that of the parent bird is the method of expressing a desire for food, and after enduring much importuning—evidently intended to inculcate abstemiousness in the young—the provider opens its mouth to the widest. The youngster immediately thrusts its head into the gullet of the parent as far as the shoulders, and deftly extracts the delicacy purveyed, bolting it intact before withdrawing its head. So far as I am aware, no photograph of this operation had been secured until I was successful recently in obtaining a snapshot."

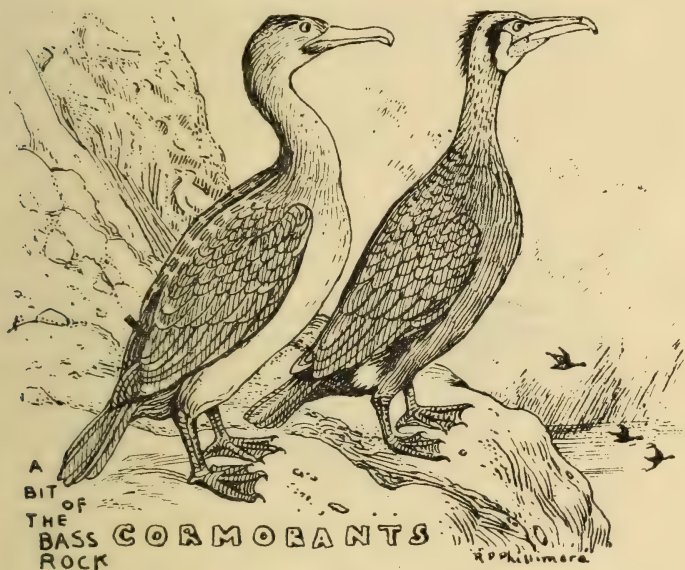
The young gannets are hatched blind and without any feathers. Soon, however, they get a covering of down, which in its turn gives place to the feathers—the plumage being of a colour almost black, speckled over with white triangular spots, so that the bird in its first year appears as if it were an altogether different species. Gradually the colour becomes lighter until their third year, when the birds arrive at maturity, they are snow-white, except the tips of their wings which are black, and their heads a dull yellowish colour.

They are said to live to a great age—even to the three score years and ten of the human biped. When outstretched their wings measure 6 feet from tip to tip.

A peculiarity of the gannet is that though it can dive from a great elevation, estimated at from fifty to two hundred feet, it cannot, like the cormorants, guillemots,

and some other birds, submerge its body whilst swimming on the water.

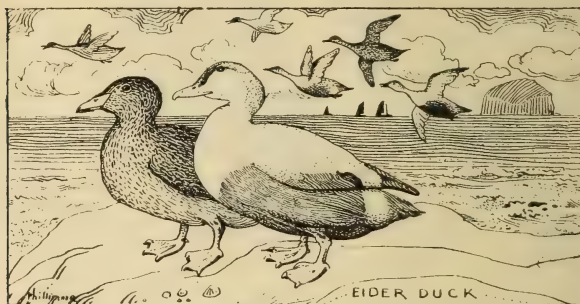
It may be here noted that the terns or sea-swallows, like the solans, are able to dive from a height. On the other hand, strange to say, the gulls are incapable of diving at all.



The cormorants, or skarts, as they are locally called, are few in number compared to their cousins, the solans, and it is only here and there they may be noted amongst the other feathered inhabitants. When young, they have a considerable portion of the under parts white, but this becomes less and less as they reach maturity, which is

in the third year. Then the under parts of the body are uniform glossy, greenish black, and the eyes a deep green. The male birds have a crest. In swimming they carry the head very erect and alert, the body being almost submerged. On the approach of danger they immediately dive.

Their feathers do not seem altogether impervious to water, for they may often be seen, after being in the sea for some time, sitting on the rocks flapping the moisture from their wings, or extending them out to dry in the sun and wind—a custom that seems peculiar to this bird.



The eider duck is also a frequenter of the Bass as off the other islands of the Forth. Our illustration will show how different in appearance the male bird is to the female—the latter being of a dark speckled brown, whilst the male is conspicuous in black and white. These birds lay their eggs, of an olive green colour, in long grass or seaweed along the shore, and on the Bass a

favourite place used to be the grassy slope below the ruined walls of the castle. The usual number of eggs is five, and the parent bird covers these with the celebrated down which it plucks from its own breast. The hatching is done entirely by the female birds, probably owing to its colouration which renders it quite un-conspicuous amidst its surroundings.

And here again I must quote, for the reader's delectation, another graphic picture of bird life by that keen observer, "J. M. C."

Speaking of the eider duck, he says :

"Contrary to what one would expect, they seem to confine their attention to all kinds of crabs, starfish, and mussels, which are garnered from the sea bottom after a somewhat prolonged dive. From our altitude, in quiet weather, they can be clearly seen scurrying over the rocky bottom, with partially opened wings, gliding under and over each other in busy quest of the succulent food which constitutes their menu. Whenever a capture is made, say, a crab, the head of the bird is directed upwards, the wings are closed firmly, and by the vigorous propulsion of the webbed feet, assisted, of course, by the natural buoyancy of the bird, the surface is rapidly reached. The crab, if small, is then bolted intact. If fairly large, it is held firmly in the bill and repeatedly shaken, this violence ultimately divesting the body of legs and claws, in which condition it is then swallowed, if, meanwhile,

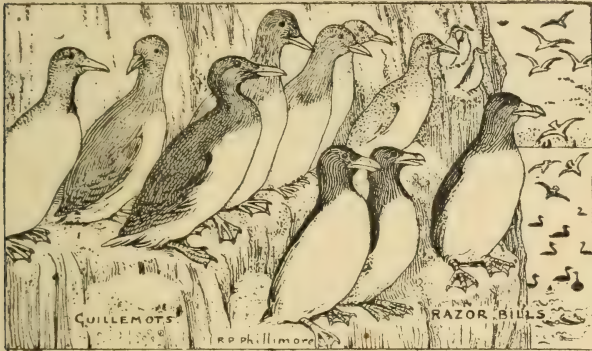
the eider has been fortunate enough to escape the attention of the predatory gulls, usually in close attendance. Very often the gulls forcibly secure the greater portion of the spoil. Hovering close to the surface, they await the re-appearance of their unwilling providers and swoop viciously as they emerge. The eider, by repeated diving, struggles to retain his prey, but often from sheer exhaustion is compelled to relinquish it to his rapacious assailant. If too large for the gull's immediate consumption, the crab is deported to the nearest rock, and there hammered to the required dimensions. In some cases, after repeated dives to evade capture, the eider will swallow its prize under water."

Another very interesting bird that frequents the Bass in large numbers is the quaint and comical looking Puffin, or "Tammie Norrie" as he is locally called. From his ponderous tri-coloured bill of blue and yellow and red, he is also sometimes called the "sea-parrot." Flocks of these birds frequent the grassy slopes, and make their nests in rabbit holes and in crevices of the rock. They take their flight to other climes in August.

The razorbills associate with the guillemots. At the beginning of May they take up their position on the Rock for the purpose of incubation. Here they congregate in large numbers, sitting close together, tier above tier, and row above row. They deposit a single egg on the bare rock, and notwithstanding the numbers of them

thus mixed together, yet no confusion takes place, each bird knows her own egg, and hatches it in that situation.

The guillemots or willocks are similar in appearance and habits to the razorbills. When young, they have a plaintive whistling call which is in striking contrast to the hoarse cry they utter when full grown.



Other bird visitors are jackdaws, and of raptorial birds, a pair of peregrine falcons are generally in evidence on the Rock to prey on the weaker species of birds that visit the island.

In conclusion it may be mentioned that as in the zoology of the Bass so in that of plant life, there are peculiarities which will be interesting to the student of Botany.

The comparatively rare plants, the sea-beet and the tree-mallow, are met with, but only on the lower terrace below the wall of the fortifications. This is due to the

fact that the sheep that used to graze on the ground north of the castle completely exterminated the plants on that portion of the island.

The tree-mallow appears to be only found in one other locality in Scotland—on Ailsa Craig.

From the foregoing brief account of the remarkable religious and political history of the Bass, and the wonderful interest attaching to it on account of its bird and plant life, not to mention its geological interest, the reader will note the Rock is not merely

“An island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals and orcs, and sea-mews’ clang.”





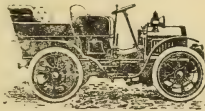
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